GLIMPSES OF KASHMIRI CULTURE

BY

PROFESSOR K.N. DHAR

Series I

'Glimpses Of Kashmiri Culture'

BY

Professor K. N. Dhar

(A. S. Govt. College, Srinagar.)

1975

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PREAMBLE

CULTURE in ordinary parlance is taken to be the sum-total of a nation's aesthetic and intellectual attainments. Kashmir from the days of yore, though hemmed in between the mountain - barriers has had the good fortune of evolving a culture of its own unsavoured by narrow parochial attitudes. To speak figuratively, a Kashmiri by faith and conviction did not only see beyond mountains but also beyond his own self. He did not elect to live in his own 'Island', but instead chose to bequeath to the posterity such pearless gems of intellectual and aesthetic content, whose evergreen shimmer has never grown stale. It is ravishingly fresh and rejuvenating.

With this end in view and also to acquaint the world of this heritage, worth to be weighed in gold, the Parmananda Research Institute has initiated a phased project of bringing to light our literary giants of uncommon intellect in the field of philosophy, poetry, chronicle-writing and rhetorics. This idea behind the assignment explains squarely the title of this book, serialized as the first instalment of this project. In this we have tried to explain and also condense the contribution made by the great Shaiva-scholar Abhinavagupta in the realm of philosophy. Moreover, in the poetry of Ksemendra we have striven to mark the frontiers between 'Idealism' and 'Realism'. The progressive trends in poetry were ushered in by Ksemendra in those hoary days when anybody transgressing the set-norms of poetry-writing could be dubbed as a heretic. Ksemendra revolutionized the poet's time-honoured attitude to poetry and made it a potent vehicle for interpreting the joys and sorrows of the man in the street.

Both these stalwarts have added fresh dimensions in their respective fields, to the world-thought. They had the intuition enough to fore - see the demands future would make on these two ingredients

of culture — philosophy and poetry — intellect and aesthetics; hence they prophetically made their respective contributions which are full of their fragrance and flavour in these days of strain and stress. In sooth, it has provided the contours on which the modern edifice of philosophy and criticism is securely based. This very fact entitles them to be included in the first series of this project. Moreover, chronologically speaking also, their seniority in the hierarchy of such savants is assured beyond any shadow of doubt.

Before closing, I deem it my pleasant duty to thank the Trustees of Shri Rupa Devi Sharada Peetha Trust for encouranging me to go through this ordeal and also make my efforts in this direction meaningful by their liberal munificence in the shape of providing funds for seeing it through the press and other formalities relevant to it. Dr. Vimla Dhar, President of the Trust took special interest to see that no difficulty is encountered by Shri Parmananda Research Institute in presenting this thesis to the public in general. Other trustees also gave me ample relief in the work of printig this book.

I am sure that this first series will receive the reception, it deserves. Constructive suggestions will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged. In such pursuits, where the past is to be interpreted in terms of the present, healthy criticism proves of great help, especially when a series is to be brought out.

In the end, the management of the Aparna Printing Press, Srinagar, also deserves a word of appreciation for cooperating actively with us in printing this publication in a very short time. If some misprints however ... to the notice of the worthy readers, these ... be set right by them as a token of ... for this good cause.

3. ...

... Bandhan)

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With reverence

Dedicated to the Inspiring memory

of

our Founder—President

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(Accountant General Jammu & Kashmir)

who epitomized in himself

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CONTENTS

S. No.	Subject	Pages
1.	**Abhinavagupta**— The Philosopher.	1—46.
2.	**Ksemendra**— The People's Poet.	47—80.

Abhinavagupta—the Philosopher.

ABHINAVAGUPTA has been extolled as 'Mahamahesvara" by the subsequent Kashmiri authors, his disciples and admirers, which precisely means the "great devotee of Siva", or the "Supreme - Self" in Shaivistic parlance. Kashmiri tradition also is unequivocal in testifying to his versatility. He wrote on philosophy (Saiva-Darshan, commentary on Bhagvad Gita), commented upon Anandavardhan's "Dhvanayloka", Bharata's "Natya Shastra", thus epitomized in himself the diverse talents of a philosopher, rhetorician, and a critic on dramaturgy. Morever on Ksemendra's testimony, we know that he himself studied literature (Sahitya) with such a learned Guru.[1] His command over rhetorics was so enthralling that Mammatta- the reputed author of 'Kavya Prakash' out of veneration for his erudition in the subject refers to him as " Abhinavagupta Pada ".[2] Pada is added to the names to show great respect.[3] Vamana the propounder of Riti school in Indian Rhetorics and commentator of 'Kavya Prakasha' known as "Bala Bodhini" has alluded to Abhinavagupta as "an intellectual giant and like a serpent (terror) to his young school - fellows." This all goes to prove that Abhinavagupta deserves these compliments fully as given to him by the Kashmiri tradition and literary authors as will be shown later. However, in Indian literary

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1. Baharat Manjri. *2. Kavya Prakasha.*

3. Sir M. Williams, Skt. English Dictionary.

tradition two such names have come down to us. The first Abhinavagupta belongs to Kamarupa (Assam) and is a Sakhta- a worshipper of Shakti or Devi. The solitary reference made to him is by one Madhva in his "Shankra Digvijaya,"[1] who also wrote a Shanker Bashya, presumably on Badrayan's Vedanta Sutras. He was a contemporary of Sankaracharya who lived according to accepted opinion from 788 to 820 A. D. Abhinavagupta of Assam was in the first instance antagonistic to the monistic theory as preached by Sankara, but having been defeated in the Shastrartha (interpretation of the sacred lore) became his disciple. The Indologist of Dr. Aufrecht's calibre should not have made such a glaring mistake as to include. "Shaktabhashya" among the works of Abhinavagupta of Kashmir. Perhaps the prefixes "Shakhta" and "Maheshwara" make all the difference between the two and this distinction has been made clear between the two even in very early times.

Abhinavagupta being a conscious artist was not averse to biography. He has given in the colophons of his various works his genealogy and also some dates. It definitely goes to his credit and does not leave us guessing. In his "Paratrimshika Vivarna" he explicitly pens down the name of his earliest ancestor as Atrigupta who was born in Antarvedi- the Doab between the Ganges and the Jamuna[3] Again in 'Tantraloka' he refers to his sterling qualities of head and heart and being captivated by these was brought to Kashmir- "The crest of Himalayas"- by King Lalitaditya[4] The date of the reign of Lalitaditya is circa 725 - 761.

1. *Sankara Digvijaya xv, 158.*
2. *Catallogus Catalogum page 25.* 3. *280.*
4. *Ahnika 37.*

He was also known as Mukhtapida and was eager for conquests.[1] He defeated the king of Kanauj Yasosvarman[2] and along with the booty brought Atrigupta also to Kashmir. Abhinavagupta goes on to record "In that beautiful city (Srinagar) like that of Kubera's (Alka) in front of the temple of "Sheetanshumauli" (Siva having the moon as his crest) on the Vitasta, the king got built for him a spacious house and also granted a Jagir of land to him.[3] There is a veritable gap of a century and a half between Atrigupta and Abhinavagupta's grand father Varahagupta. In between the two, the author has left the family tree blank for reasons best known to him. Coming direct to the Tantraloka commentary Abhinavagupta explicitly says that his father was Narasinhagupta, popularly known as Chukhulaka and his mother's name was Vimalakala.[4]

Herein we have to refer to the observation made by late Madhusudan Kaul of the Kashmir Research Department who in his introduction to "Ishvara Pratyabhijna" has erroneously taken Laksmana Gupta as his father.[5] Swami Laksmana Ji also corroborates the other view that Narsimha Gupta was his father.[6] More-so, the direct confession of Abhinavagupta as regards his parents and their names leaves nothing to argue about.[7] Laksmana Gupta was definitely one of the preceptors of Abhinavagupta who initiated him into the Pratyabhijna Shastra as acknowledged by him in his introduction to Ishvara Pratybhijna Vivriti Vimarshini in the words:

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1. *Raja Tarangni IV, 126, 131.* 2. *Ibid IV, 140.*
3. *Tantraloka - Ah, 37.* 4. *Tantraloka Commentary I, 14.*
5. *Vimarshini Vol. II page 7.* 6. *In his introduction to Srimad Bhagvadgita commentary by Abhinavagupta page 2.*
7. *Tantraloka, commentary I-14.*

श्रीमल्लक्ष्मणगुप्तदर्शितपथः श्रीप्रत्यभिज्ञाविधौ ।

(Sri Laksamna Gupta showed me the path to Pratyabhijna theory (recognition).

The silence of Kalhana about Abhinavagupta as such is intriguing— he mentions three "Abhinavas" in his Raja-Tarangini and the suffix "Gupta" he has not appended with any of these. The first 'Abhinava'[1] is a "Divira" or a scribe,' the second foster-brother of Kayyamantaka in the reign of Samgramaraja[2] and the third a Damara[3] a landed-aristocrat. No where the name of Abhinavagupta appears as a scholar of repute or a Saiva; whereas he has at times referred to such names as Muktakana, Shivasvamin, Anandavardhana and Ratnakara etc.[4] It may be argued that our author was more after learning than after the favour of kings, hence was not attached to any court. Consequently Kalhana, whose forte being the description of kings, skips over him. However, the fame which Abhinavagupta acquired during his life time and even after, could not have eluded the chronicler Kalhana. He could not ignore the powerful Kashmiri tradition. While mentioning Ananda Vardhana the name of Abhinavagupta would have been a natural corollary being his commentator. Subsequent research in this behalf might throw some light on this omission. About his date or probable years in which he lived, he has bequeathed to us some keys which if properly used, can unlock this bane of Indian date-keeping most easily. In the last verse of "Brhati Vimarsini" he states that he finished this assignment

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1. VI, 130. *2. VII, 93.* *3. VII, 59.*
4. V, 34.

in the 90th year when 4115 years of Kaliyuga had elapsed; by deducting 25 years from the Kali era the local or Saptarsi era can be found. It works at 4090th year of the Saptarsi Calendar, and the word "Navatitame" used by him in that verse corresponds to 90th year of 4000 Kali era. Even, we at present write down only 74 when actually it is 1974— seventy fourth year of 1900 Christian era.

Again in one of his Stotras which is called "Bhairavastava" in the last verse he gives the date and his name also:—

वसुरसपौषेकृष्णदशम्यामभिनवगुप्तः स्तवमिदमकरोत् ।

"Abhinavagupta composed this Stava (eulogy) on the 10th of dark fortnight in the month of Pausha in the year Vasu (8) Rasa (6)." (In Sanskrit the digits are read from the left), hence it comes to 68. It is definitely the 68th year of the Saptarsi Samvat 4000 as shown above. Moreover, in his Kramastotra he again refers to date as :—

षट्षष्ठिनामकेवर्षेनवम्यामसितेऽह्नि ।
मयाऽभिनवगुप्तेन मार्गशीर्षे स्तुतः शिवः ॥

"In the 66th year, on the ninth day of dark fornight, I, Abhinavagugta, in the month of Maghar, praised Lord Siva". So it can safely be inferred that Abhinavagupta's literary period extended from 4066 to 4090 laukika or Saptarsi era corresponding to 990-1015 A. D. Even though we have tried to locate the period, but at the same time we are not sure that Kramastotra is his first work. It is to be remembered in this context that Abhinavagupta having written a host of books, the chronological order of his works cannot be fixed easily. Those works which bear the dates

can be arranged without any effort, but those which have no date or have not been referred to by the subsequent authors will defeat any such solution. In this way we can safely say that "Kramastotra" might not be his first composition, it might be pushed back to two decades at least, as in the chronological order fixed by Dr. K. C Pandey this Stotra stands at No. 13[1]. Hence we might safely assume that his literary career commenced from 970 A. D. According to his own testimony he adopted many Gurus for pursuing knowledge in different fields and even went outside Kashmir, presumably to Jalandhar to find a Guru "Shamboo Nath" there[2]. The years of initiation after which maturity dawned on him might be taken not less than 30 years, after which, confidence was gained by him to write independently. Hence we might place his birth nearabout 940- A. D. He might have lived even beyond 1015 A. D. and the varacity of the tradition prevalent in Kashmir to this day, that he entered a cave while reciting the Bhairavastava alongwith 1200 disciples, and was never seen again cannot be doubted. This cave, alleged to have received the mortal frame of Abhinavagupta, is situated at "Birwa" village some five miles from Magam on the Gulmarg range.

The thirst for knowledge in our author was insatiable. A bevy of Gurus was adopted by him for this purpose. According to his own statement he read at the feet of :—

1 *Abhinavagupta— Historical and philosophical study, page - 22.*

2 *Tantraloka Ah. 37.*

	Subject
1. Narasimha Gupta (His father).	Grammar.
2. Vainanatha.[1]	Dvaitadvaita Tantras.
3 Bhuti Rajatanaya.	Daulistic Saivism.
4. Bhuti Raja.	Brahma – Vidya.
5. Laksmanagupta.	Pratyabhijna.
6. Indu Raja.	Dhvani.
7. Bhatta Tota.	Dramaturgy.

He had other Gurus also but the subjects have not been specified in their cases. From all his compositions at least 19 such preceptors can be gleaned.

As will be said later,[2] the 10th and 11th centuries in Kashmiri literary lore have been a landmark. The influence of religion has been pronounced. A climate of religious rennaissance was ushered in and many stalwarts like Anandavardhana, Vamana, Ksemendra, Bilhana, Kālhana ~~and last but not~~ the least Abhinavagupta contributed himself in making the sanskrit literary tradition richer and all the more diverse, in as much as, the subjects like rhetorics, dramaturgy, poetry, history and philosophy, were treated in an admirable way. So, it can be of value to learn that the whole family of Abhinavagupta was renowned for its unique literary bent of mind. His uncle Vamana Gupta was an expert in poetics and he initiated our author into this field, In the Abhinava Bharati Abhinavagupta quotes him and is also included in the list of his teachers.[3] His younger brother Manoratha was admitted to the disciplehood of his brother-Abhinava-

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1. Ibid.

2. See 'Bilhani'.

3. 297.

gupta–perhaps he was first in that order[1]. His five cousins Ksema, Utpala, Abhinava, Chakraka and Padamgupta were also very well - read. If Ksema be identified with Ksema Raja the Author of Spanda-Nirnaya and other treatises on Shaivism, then the scholarship of his cousin is beyond doubt. It need not be reitered that his father Narasimhagupta possessed intellectual calibre of highest order and was proficient in all the Shastras and a great devotee of Shiva.[2] In this atmosphère of devotion and learning par excellence, Abhinava Gupta was mentally groomed to undertake the stupendous task awaiting him.

So, it is not surprising to find that "Jayaratha"[3] alludes to his being 'Yoginibhu',[4] that his parents while uniting for his birth rose above all wordly desires and identified themselves with Shiva and Shakti. The offspring thus born called Yoginibhu, is looked upon as a fit vehicle for propounding and propagating Shaivistic Monism.

Not only this, Abhnivagupta has been called a Bhairava incarnate by the commentator of Parmartha-Sara; "Yoga - Raja," while commenting on the last line of this treatise :

अभिनवगुप्तेन मया शिवचरणस्मरणदीपिते ।

has explained this epithet at length. So the traditional belief amongst the Kashmiri Pandits that Abhinavagupta was a living Bhairava in human form is not without basis.

Now we come to the place of his mental activity. From his own authority we learn that Lalitaditya

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1. *Tantraloka, Ah - 37.*
2. *Ibid- I, 14* 3. *Commentator of Tantraloka.*
4. *Ibid- I, 14, 15.*

had got built a palatial house for Atrigupta when he carried him along from Antarvedi to Kashmir (quoted earlier). The house was built on the banks of Vitasta वितस्तारोधसि. However, in one of the Msss of Tantraloka belonging to Late Pt. Maheshwar Razdan there is a different reading as वैतस्त मूघ्नि meaning "at the head of Vitasta" i.e. the source. However, in the quotation is used the pronoun तस्मिन् (in) agreeing with प्रवरपुरे (Srinagar) hence this वतस्तमूघ्नि seems to be an interpolation.

In the first verse on the Vartika on "Malini Vijaya" it has been specifically laid down :

प्रवरपुरनामधेये पुरे पूर्वे काशमीरिकोऽभिनवगुप्तः ।
मालिन्यामादिमेवाक्ये वार्तिकमेतद्रचयतिस्म ॥

"The Kashmirian Abhinavagupta in the East of the city known as Pravarapura (Srinagar) composed the Vartika on the very first verse of "Malinivijya".

From this it is clear that Srinagar was divided into several zones then— East, West etc. and in the East Zone our author lived; but nothing can be said whether this was his ancestral home or an acquired house. However, there is a reference in the Tantraloka of his having shifted to another city at the request of one of his disciples Mandra :

विक्षिप्तभावपरिहारमस्रो चिकीर्षन् मन्द्रः स्वके पुरवरे स्थितिमस्य वव्रे ।

"Mandra in order to save him (Abhinavagupta) from distraction requested him to shift to his beautiful city."[1]

It is also clear from this, that this earlier house must have been located in a very busy centre of the city,

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1 *Tantraloka- Ah- 37.*

so was not suitable for his calm composure and undivided attention, so necessary for the delineation of such a terse and delicate subject as philosophy.

On the authority of Kalhana we know that Lalitaditya had built three more cities in the outskirts of Pravarapura— Srinagar. The one Parihasapura and the other Lali'pura and the third Lokapunya. However, the former was meant as a respite for the war-worn king and all the amenities of Parihasa (enjoyment) were provided there.[1] Hence it could not be a quiet city. The latter was not taken kindly to by the king as it was built by his architect in his absence,[2] hence it must have been comparatively deserted and all the same calmer. It might be surmised that Mandra lived there and invited his Guru to that very city for being quieter and far from the madding crowds, so that his "distraction could be averted". The third city along with a cluster of villages was given in offering to Vishnu.

Even though Abhinavagupta lived during the span of 940 - 1015 A. D. but no city worth the name was founded by the kings during this period. Although he saw the reigns of Yashaskara, Samgrama Deva, Ksema Gupta, Didda and Samgrama Raja, yet the cities founded by Lalitaditya still found favour with the people. Even though one century and a half had elapsed, the twin cities of Parihaspura and Lalitpura had not fallen into oblivion. In the reign of Samgrama Raja (1003–1028 A. D.) the Brahmins of Parihasapura started a fast to bring down the fall of Tunga[4] his Prime Minister. This allusion to the city nearly two hundred years after it was founded, testifies to

1. *Raja Tarangini- IV, 194.*
2. *Ibid- IV, 186.* 3. *Ibid- IV, 193.*
4. *Ibid- VII, 13*

its being very important at that time and might have been the royal capital even.

Before an attempt is made to pen down the contribution of Abhinavagupta to Shaivism, it will be more appropriate to trace the origin of Siva worship in Kashmir. Perhaps as a corollary to this, we shall have to furnish at least the rough contours on which the earliest religion of Kashmiris was based.

The most ancient book on Kashmir History 'Nilamata Purana' specifically lays down that Shiva and His Shakti were propitiated at that time, but other deities such as Ganesha, Puranic gods, Vedic pantheon and even Buddha (as an Avatara) were not ignored.[1] This fact without any doubt proves that earliest Kashmiri religion was polytheistic in content and character, but the worship of Shiva and His consort Parvati had an edge over all other gods. Not only this, the aboriginal deities like Nikumbha etc. were also owned. On the same subject S. C. Ray observes, "that the earliest inhabitants of Kashmir probably cherished some aboriginal beliefs...... In the third century B. C. Buddhism seems to have made some headway in Kashmir. Among Hindu gods Shiva either originated or entered the valley some time before the faith of the Shakya prince.[2]

In this connection the word "Naga" used to describe the people of Kashmir, did drop a hint as to its being related to Snake - worship. But word "Naga" in Sanskrit does not mean snake only, it is synonym-

1. *Nilmata Purana- 629, 635, 674. 681, 1049, etc.*
2. *The early HIstory and Culture of Kashmir- VI-140.*

ous with a semi-divine being, a cruel person, an elephant or a cloud also. However, Shiva's association with the religion of Kashmir did provide a context for translating "Naga" as a serpent, as it is worn by the Lord around His neck. In this connection H. H. Wilson remarks, "originally, no doubt, it (the religion of Kashmir) was oplute or snake-worship, but this is a part of the Hindu ritual and the Nagas are included in the orthodox pantheon[1]" So it is abundantly clear that the ancient religion of Kashmir was an amalgm of the "new" as preached by Kashyapa and the old— that of the aboriginals whose king was Nikumbha. Even though other gods were also worshiped, the emphasis on Shiva and His Shakti was pronounced. The influence of Buddhism as such in those times was not worth mentioning, since it was only being adopted by the land then, and after some time did give a fillip to the philosophical remblings which reigned supreme for nearabout two centuries in Kashmir.

Kalhana has copiously furnished us the proof that Buddhism and orthodox creeds of Shiva and Visnu co-existed in a most tolerant manner here. Whenever any endowment is made for religious purposes, or a Stupa or a Vihara is constructed, the individual or he king, or his members of the family or his Minister with equal zeal and faith constructed shrines of Shiva and Vishnu.[2] also.

However, this climate of acco odation between the two faiths-- Hinduism and Buddhism was disturbed

1. *Essays on the Hindu History of Kashmir.*
2. *Stein— Introduction, Raja Tarangini- Page 9.*

by the advent of Nagarjuna on the Kashmir scene. He lived at Shadarhatvana (modern Harwan) and took preaching of Buddhism in right earnest. This provoked the "orthodoxy". Insult was added to the injury by King Kanishka (125--60 A.D) who encouraged the propagation of the Buddhistic teachings and gave it royal patronage.[1] Kalhana while recording all this has to say: "After defeating in disputations all learned opponents (Nagarjuna), these enemies of tradition brought to an end etc. the observance of the rites prescribed in the Nilamata."[2] This was a veritable revolt against the established faith of the land and the astute Brahmin lost no opportunity in providing a more palatable alternative to Buddhistic tenets- which may well be called the seeds of Shaivism which sprouted forth in full bloom later.

Perhapes this pre-supposes the give and take which must have prceded before Buddhism went into oblivion in Kashmir. The most potent cause for its decline was that the Shaivism fought on its own ground and assimilated such tenets which were finding favour with the people. Thus the Shaivas on account of their exceptional erudition did provide such a faith to people which though new, was not at all alien. It respected orthodoxy but at the same time did not abhor the "new". A compromise between the two did the trick and Buddhism had to eat the humble pie.

Moreover, the versatile Brahmin of Kashmir, did not stop to lick his wounds inflicted by Buddhist propagation, but like a seasoned general attacked its weakest point i. e. the silence about God. Indians at

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1. *Raja Tarangini- I, 171 - 173.*
2. *Ibid- I 178.*

large and a Kashmiri especially, are a God-fearing nation, hence the Shaivite knowing full well this credulity of a Kashmiri, transplanted God again in their faith by naming it Paramshiva or Sadashiva with its antecedent— the Para Shakti. In all the treatises on Shaivism hair-splitting arguments are laid down in proving the existence of the "Supreme Soul". Hence the Buddhists had to take up to their heels in the absence of any powerful counter-argument on this subject. Perhaps the people in general, also became sceptic about their faith, because their belief in God is skin - deep. This has actually permeated their marrow even. They could consequently not reconcile themselves with more are less "Godless" faith. The adage "Had there been no God, Man would have invented one" was proved to the hilt in Kashmir. Herein it will be of interest to mention that Shankaracharaya's visit to Kashmir acted as the last nail in the Buddhist coffin.

Shankara after his unparalled victory over the Buddhists in plains came to Kashmir sometime about the second decade of the 9th century.[1] Even though no other reference regarding his visit to Kashmir has been traced as yet, the popular tradition corroborates its authenticity. This cannot be dismissed cheaply, in as much as, that on the perusal of Shankra's treatises it becomes patently clear that his compositions did influence the Kashmiri Saiva literature; more so his imprint on Pratyabhijna (theory of recognition) is obviusly discerned. In his "Dakhshina Murti Stotra" commented upon by his pupil Sureshvaracharya the conception of ultimate reality as preached by him and known as Tantric philosophy and that expounded

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1. *Shankara Digvijaya- XVI, 54 - 80.*

in Pratyabhijna seems to be the same. Not only this. even some technical terms as used in Pratyabhijna have been earlier used by him in the same sense:–

(१) ज्ञानक्रिये जगत्कल्पितौ दृश्यते चेतनाश्रये ।

(Dakshina Murti Stotra Commentary (2), 13.

(२) ज्ञानं क्रिया च भूतानां जीवताम् जीवनं मतम् ।

(Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini- 1, 39)

Translation: (i)

"The universe has been created out of knowledge and action and seems also possessed of consciousness."

Translation (ii)

"Knowledge and action are considered the source of all living beings."

(१) तस्मात् सत्ता स्फुरत्ता च सर्वत्रापयानुवर्तते ।

(Dakshina Murti Stotra Commentary- (2), 13)

(२) सा स्फुरत्ता महा सत्ता देशकालाविशेषिणी ।

(Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini 1, 207)

Translation (i)

"Therefore, that shining spirit follows everywhere the opposite direction (beyond time and space)."

Translation (ii)

"The shining supreme spirit is not bound by space and time."

Such examples can be multiplied and so the internal evidence culled from the compositions of Shankara regarding his coming to Kashmir and subsequently not only the thought but even the expresions being found common in both (as above), it may be safely inferred that he did come to Kashmir and had presumably discussions with the propounders of Shaiva faith here. On a profound perusal of his "Saundarya Lahari" it becomes lucid that he got influenced also by Kashmirian Shaiva Acharyas and did concede the existence of monistic Tantras and also their number:–

चतुः षष्टया तन्त्रैः सकलं अभिसंधाय भुवनम् ।

(Saundaraya Lahari)

Translation:

(O Devi), You having built the whole universe with sixty four Tantras ....

Hence we come to the stage when Buddhism being banished, the vaccum thus created began to be filled by the Acharayas of Saivism who had the blessings of Shankaracharya also.

However, the Buddhists definitely earn credit for initiating the modus operandi of discussions, symposia and religious congregations for propagating their philosophy and projecting this to the masses. We have references of Buddhist councils being held here in Ashoka's and Kanishka's time.[1] In this connection Dr. R. K. Kaw has to say "It will be observed that Buddhists initiated a critical view in matters which were so far believed only as gospel truths."[2] Hence as a reaction to this, the Brahmin votaries of

1. *Raja Tarangini- I, 101 - 107, 168-173.*
2. *The Doctrine of Recognition, Page 28.*

Shiva and Shakti also inducted into their cult the method of philosophal reasoning and persuasive argumentation. "Shaiva Literature" is fully replete with these two ingredients.

The whole of Shaiva literature comes under the name of Trika, Trikashastra or Trikashasana. The derivation of the epithet "Trika" among other things can be ascribed to triple principle with which this system deals e. g. Shiva, Shakti, Anu; Pati, Pasha and Pashu; Nara, Shakti and Shiva; Para and Apara, and Parapara and finally Bheda, Abheda; Bheda, and Abehda; or it may have been called as such, "For the reason that its chief authority is the the triad consisting of three chief Agamas– Siddha, Namaka, and Malini.[1] This literature falls into three categories:–

i) The Agama - Shastra.
ii) The Spanda - Shastra.
iii) Pratyabhijna - Shastra.

"The Agamas are believed to be revelations, having come down through ages."[2] These emphasize the doctrine of Jnana (knowledge) and Kriya (action) for becoming one with the superself.

The most important composition of this branch are the "Shiva Sutras". Their authorship is attributed to Lord Shiva and were in course of time revealed to Sage Vasugupta. On the authority of Raja Tarangini we know that Bhatta Kallata, the pupil of Vasugupta lived in the reign of Avanti Varman (855–883 A. D.)[3]

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1. *Dr. R. K. Kaw— Doctrine of Recognition, Also Tantraloka I-36.*
2. *J. C. Chatterji; Kashmir Shaivism- Page 8.*
3. *V, 66.*

Hence it is clear that Vasugupta whose reputation was established as a Shaiva teacher must have preceded him at least by 30 years if not more i. e. 825 A. D. The purpose of writing this thesis (or comunicating it as the tradition goes) was to counteract the dualistic teachings in vogue at that time. In Shivasutra Vimarshini by Kshema Raja, it is clearly laid down:—

द्वैतदर्शनाधिवासितप्राये जीवलोके रहस्यसंप्रदायो मा विच्छेदि – इत्याशयतः ।

> " The occult school (of Saiva) may not get into oblivion by the preaching of duality amongst the people– with this purpose."

So the Agamas taught the pure non-dualistic Monism.

The Spandashastra actually amplifies the main principles of shaivism in greater detail than the Shiva-Sutras. The main treatise on this Shastra is Spanda Sutras or Karikas which have been commented upon by Kallata, Ramakantha, Utpalavaishnava (Not of Shaiva School) and Kshema Raja. The content of philosophical reasoning is missing in the main treatise, while the commentators have tried to supply it with meaningful success. Kshema Raja in his commentary ascribes to Vasugupta the authorship of this Shastra also. But Utpala (Vaishnava) uses the unambiguous phrase while commenting on the very first Sutra in his Pradipika. He gives it as "Sangrahagranthakrta" meaning "a work which gathers together the meaning of Shiva Sutras."[1] In one of his verses he attributes its authorship to Bhatta Kallata via Vasu

1. *J. C. Chatterji; Kashmir Shaivism- Page 15.*

Gupta.[1] But this verse is not found in the recension of Kshema Raja. However, it is to make clear that contents being the same in Shiva-Sutras and Spanda Sutras the authorship could not be different. As the Shiva–Sutras have been revealed to Vasu Gupta, hence Spanda Shastra may also be his acquisition.

The word "Spanda" as prefixed with this branch of Trika means "a throb", "quivering" or "movement." The quivering of the mind receives the beautitude of the "Super soul" and hence attains the "Nishkampa Pradipa"— unquivering flame of the lamp as given in Bhagvad Gita[2], or the name to this treatise may be explained as the "throbs of Lord Shiva" clothed in words by later Yogis and Siddhas such as Vasugupta etc.

The third and the most important school of Shaivadarshan is the Pratyabhijna cult with which our author is directly concerned. Somananda is said to be the originator of this branch[3] and has been called as " Tarksya Karta " meaning the founder of reasoning"[4] He was a pioneer in grafting the element of argument, reasoning, support and refutations on rational lines into this system. The first book of this system is "Shiva Drishti" whose authorship is attributed to Soma Nanda. Unfortunately this masterly treatise is now extant upto four Ahnikas (Chapters) only; atleast it had seven as is clearly quoted by Abhinavagupta in Para - Trimsika. Perhapes this is the main reason as to why his erudite commentator Utpaladeva does not

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1. Pradipika, 53rd Verse.

2. Bhagvad Gita— II Chapter.

3. Paratrimshika. 71. *4. Tantraloka- I, 10.*

go beyond 74th verse of the IV Ahnika. Subsequently the three chapters were salvaged and the number made seven; but it seems that these form a part of the Vrtti (gloss) compiled by Somananda himself and not the original one. The "Forte" of Somananda's teaching is :

शिवो दाता शिवोभोक्ता शिवः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।

"Shiva" the auspicious and Supreme soul, is the giver and he is the enjoyer. This whole universe is (permeated by) Shiva."

His disciple and at times taken to be his son also[1] Utpaladeva commented in a most scholastic manner on the "Shiva Drishti" of Soma Nanda, and for the first time introduced the element of Pratyabhijna in Shaiva literature. He named his treatise, though based on the doctrine taught by Somananda as "Ishwara Prtayabhijna–Karikas" in Sutra form consisting of four Adhikaras (cantos), further subdivided into a number of Ahnikas or sections. He also propounded "Svatantriya" theory of his own, independent of his Guru Somananda. By Svatantriya he means the "self dependent power of the lord". His exposition of the "Recognition Doctrine" has the sanctity and the authority what it should have deserved, and was even equatedwith Somananda the orginator as:—

श्री सोमानन्दनाथस्यविज्ञानप्रतिबिम्बकम् ।

"Reflection of the wisdom of Somananda"

(Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini — 2. introduction)

1. *Tantraloka. Ahnika 37.*

Perhaps being very much enamoured by the wisdom of Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta composed the shorter[1] and longer[2] versions of his commentary on the Ishwara Pratyabhijna of Utpala; who discarding all other names for this system annointed it with Pratyabhijna - recognition. This name alone has stood the test of time and is perhapes synonymous with Trika as a whole; while in essence this is not the case.

The order of Gurus (Guru Parampara) as given in Shaiva Darshani's as follows:—

श्रीकण्ठ वसुमन्तं (वसुगुंप्तं) सोमानन्दं तथोत्पलार्चयिम् ।
लक्ष्मणमभिनवगुप्तं वन्दे श्री क्षेमराजं च ॥

"I bow to Lord Shiva, Vasugupta, Somananda, and Utpalacharaya, Lakshmana (Gupta), Abhinavagupta and Kshe. a Raja."

A faint echo of teacher-taught relation can also be heard into it. Vasugupta pupil of Lord Shiva, Somananda pupil of Vasugupta, Utpala pupil of Soma Nanda, Abhinavagupta pupil of Lakshmanagupta and Kshemaraja the pupil of Abhinavagupta. Had both Vasugupta and Somananda been the pupils of Lord, then the insertion of "Cha" would have made it clear.

From this it is clear that Vasugupta and Somananda represent the originators through the good offices of Lord Shiva while Utpala, Lakshmanagupta Abhinavagupta and Kshemaraja constitute the heirs to this system, who in their own way interpreted, supplemented and enriched the word sent to the humanity

1. *Pratyabhijna Vimarshini (Laghvi)*
2. *Pratyabhijna Vivriti Vimarshini (Brihati)*

by Lord Shiva through the first two Gurus.

Out of a host of such interpretors Abhinavagupta is not only the best but also possessed of mutlifaced genius. Not confining himself to the ramifications of "Saiva Darshan" he also strayed into the domain of Rhetorics by subscribing to Rasa theory in his commentary on Bharata Natya Shastra, and also into poetics when elucidating the "Dhvani" as enunciated by Ananda Vardhana. However, we have to delimit his versatility and shall describe him only as a religious philosopher.

However, before embarking upon this, it will not be out of place to give roughly the main characteristics of this "Darshan" so that in light of these, we might determine the place of Abhinavagupta as a philosopher; as to how he explained these and for sooth, even improved upon these.

The "Saiva Shasana"[1] starts with the assumption that Atman is the real and innermost self in everything. It does not undergo any change and is a vehicle to experience the "Parameshwara" or the Chaitanayam[2] चैतन्यमात्मा. This "Parameshwara" or Param Shiva" is not bound by time, space and form, so is omnipotent and omnipresent. However, He has a dual role— the one which pervades whole of the universe and the other transcendental in which he defeats all mainfestations. His power of pervading the universe is called Shakti, but coming out of His fountain-head is only an aspect of His and not in any way different from Him. Even though these En-

1. Synonym us with Darshan, Drishti or Agama.
2. Shiva Sutra I, i.

ergies or powers have been called numerous,[1] yet only five are the most notable.[2] The Chita Shakti (the power of resplendence) Ananda Shakti (the power of bliss), Ichha Shakti (the power of desire), Jnana Shakti (the power of knowledge), and the Kriya Shakti (the power of action), with the help of these, the "Paramshiva" manifests itself which in Saiva language is called Udaya, Unmesha, Abhasa or Srishti.

However, to create a universe is the necessity even though He is world-incarnate. Hence the universe has been thought to be composed of "Shiva Tattva (pure, auspicious element) Shakti Tattva (potential element\ Sadakhya Tattva (the element of self realisation, or being) Aishwaraya Tattva (element of identification) and last but not the least the Sad-Vidya Tattva (the elcment of true perception).[3] When in between the self and self-realization, Maya (obduration, delusion) obscures the real form of objects, the Sadhaka (experiencer) has to rise above Kala (time), Niyati (sequence), Raga (attachment) Vidya (limited perception o consciousness) Kala (limited authorship).[4] Such an experiencer who has been doped by Maya and is obsessed with time etc. is called "Purusha". Simultaneously with it is also born Prakriti[5], that latent power in him which goads him on to act or react. To awake from the slumber under the influence of Maya, the Purusha conjointly with Prakriti has to undergo some mental drill and comprehend the implication of Buddhi (conception) Ahanakara (personal I or ego) and Manas (desire)[6]. Taken in

1. *Tantra Sara - Ahnika iv.*
2. *Ibid - Ahnika, I*
3. *Paramartha Sara - Karika 4.*
4. *Ishwar Prtyabhijna III.*
5. *Paratrimshika Vriti III, 4. (ii)*
6. *Tantraloka - Ahhika, 9.*

reverse order, the desire actuates "I" ness and at the last stage conception of things becomes clear. Hence the Purusha awakenes by rejecting Maya and its five concomitents begining with Time (Kala) etc, comes face to face with चित्स्वरूपं resplendence or Shambhavi state and attains the Paramaishwarya or Self-dependence (Supreme bliss).[1] This is the purport of Shaiva Darshan or Shaiva Monism as given in the "Shiva Sutra" and "Shiva Drishiti" on broad lines.

Dr. K C. Pandey has given a long list of some 41 compositions attributed to Abhinavagupta.[2] Among these some bear dates, some are referred to by subsequent authors and some have been owned by tradition. However, the most famous works of his on "Shaiva darshan", strictly speaking are:—

1. Para - Trimshika Vivarna.
2. Prataybhijna Vimarshini (expurgated)
3. Pratyabhijna Vivriti Vimarshini (full)
4. Tantrasara.
5. Tantraloka.
6. Parmarthasara.
7. Commentary on Bhagvadgita Called Gitartha—Sangraha.

Many other compositions of his such as "Shiva Drishtyalocana" a commentary on "Shiva Drishti" as the name clearly signifies, is lost.

Chronologically speaking the "Para Trimshika" seems to be his first work in the "Shaiva Lore". It is in reality composed of the concluding portion of "Rudrayamala Tantra" belonging to Agama school on

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1. *Vijnana Bhairava, 80.* 2. *Abhinavagupta—an historical and philosophical study, page 22 - 23.*

which Abbinavagupta penned down a commentary calling it Vivarna. However, the title of the book suggests its containing thirty verses only (Trimshika), but it has even more than these. There seems to be some confusion amongst the later commentators regarding its name, while the author himself has tried to justify it like this:--

"Trimshika" is so called because it is the Supreme Lord of three powers desire, knowledge, and action."

त्रींशिका इति तिसृणां शक्तीनां इच्छाज्ञानक्रियाणामीशिका ईश्वरी ।[1]

'Para' in Shiava terminology is identical with 'Parasamvid'— the highest power of Self-Dependence. Hence 'Para Trimshika' would connote 'thirty verses of Self-Dependence', or the Super Lord of the triple formula of desire, knowledge, and action.

Pratyabhijnavimarshini and its larger edition Vivriti belong to the Pratyabhijna (recognition) school of Shaiva Shastra as propounded by Utpala Deva and orginated by Somananda.[2]

Tantrasara and Tantraloka deal with the same contents with the difference that the former is a brief summary (Sara) of the latter, a voluminous treatise. The Tantrasara is couched in prose while the Tantraloka is in metrical form. These are definitely based on Malini Vijayatantra belonging to Agama school.

Parmarthsara is a philosophical composition of 105 verses and is supposed to be based on the

1. *Para Trimsika Vivarna:* 16 - 17.
2. *Shivadrishti*— 118 - 120.

Karikas of Shesha. In his Gitarthasangraha, Abhinavagupta has emphatically declared that freedom from all miseries can be obtained by seeing Him (Paramshiva) in everything and everywhere. This freedom cannot be achieved by renunciation of the world. The battle between Pandvas and Kaurvas is actually the race between Vidya (knowledge, perception) and Avidya (ignorance, blurred perception).[1]

From the above it is clear that Abhinavagupta not only explained Pratyabhijna on which his fame rests, but also other Tantric works belonging to different schools. He did not believe in isolation but in collation which is the keynote of his philosophic bent of mind. Other commentators like Utpala, Kshemaraja etc. confined themselves to a single path but Abhinavagupta not only rode on other paths but also proved the old adage "All roads lead to Rome." He made a compromise between different views and presented such a philosophy of life which never grew stale. His synthesis - oriented approach to life gave a meaningful and healthy direction to his ideas.

Philosophy, strictly speaking, is the science of knowledge or the Tattva Vidya, the lore of the real nature of human soul or material world as being identified with the supreme spirit. Since knowledge emanates from Him, hence it can be usefully used as a medium to interpret Him If there be no originality and no Shaivacharya has claimed it, since "Shivasutras" are the word of God, the originality definitely lies in interpreting these and unravelling the esoteric content in a most intelligible and homely idiom. In

1. *First Sangrahashloka.*

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this field also Abhinavagupta has no parallel.

It is also to be remembered that our author does not rest his oars on the philosophic polemics, but also connects these with the ritual. Herein also he shows a master - mind in fitting ritual with philosophy, the mundane with the the spirit, the real with the ideal and to crown all practice with the precept. On account of his versatile genius he is at home in explaining the abstract in the context of the concrete. While revelling in the super world he does not forget the world as such He is not a dreamer but an awake artist feeling rightly the pulse of supersensuousness but at the same time not forgetting the converse form of it. He tries to explore the obverse and the converse at the same time. Hence his treatment of the subject is more realistic. Perhaps that is the main reason as to why pratyabhijna school though bequeathed to him by earlier Acharyas was actually made popular by him. He not only translated the terse philosophy in the tongue of the people but also gave it the most natural direction. Abhinavagupta does not claim any originality for introducing this "Shaiva Darshan", but most candidly records:—

श्रीसोमानन्दमतं विमृश्य मया निबद्धमिदम् ॥

"Having thought over the views of Shri Somananda, I systematized these."

Moreover, in the realm of philosophy, originality is a misnomer; because the philosophy as such is the cumulative thinking processed through ages and then finding expression through the pen or mouth of an erudite scholar. Even Shankara without mincing words,

1. *Para Trimshika Vivarna— 282.*

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categorically states that the authenticity of a system is to be tested on the touchstone of Vedas.[1] Somananda, the originator of Pratyabhijna school admits that his "Shaivadrishti" is based on Shastras, though his pupil Utpalacharya testifies to its showing new path for final emanicipation[2]. In all humility (because true knowledge bestows humility) Abhinavagupta follows the same tradition of thinking.

It may be contended that he did not compose any treatise independently, but only commented upon the works of his predecessors. Therefore he can be a commentator at best, but not an original thinker. Commentary from Abhinavagupta's view point is not merely a jugglery of words but actually the personal experience gained through spiritual experiments. He lived the maxims on which he commented. So in the exposition of such matters he sets for himself three norms - first being the personal experience, reason the second, and ancient authority the third.[3] So the contribution of Abhinavagupta to this system of philosophy is not simply of academic interest but is replete with other dimensions of thinking which even the originators failed to comprehend. The commentators preceding him gave mere dogmatic statements of the basic tenets of the Spanda school. They dared not subtract or add to these by way of argument, reasoning and judicious explanation for or against the fundamental principles. Even though some commentators notably Utpalacharya did introduce the element of argument into it, but his domain was only

1. *Shankarabhashya- 8.*
2. *Ishwara Pratyabhijna Vimarshini- II.*
3. *Tantraloka- I, 149.*

one-sided related to Pratyabhijna only and not the "Trika" as a whole. Abhinavagupta on the contrary did improve on him, though being his disciple, making it broad-based and embraching the whole gamut of Shaiva Shastra.[1] He provided rational base to it and also dwelt on the ritualistic aspect of this system. He has exhaustively explained the Monistic Shaiva rituals also. He made a happy blend of philosophy and psychology, quoted extensively from the Agamas and other established authorities; perhaps he has every right to assert:—

"अद्रष्टं प्रकटीकुर्मः गुरुनाथाज्ञया वयम्" ।[2]

"I (we) will unravel the "unseen" at the bidding of my Guru and Lord."

This verse does allude to the shortcomings of the earlier commentators who could not convert अद्रष्टं (unseen) into द्रष्टं (seen), and so it was left to Abhinavagupta to perceive it in right perspective and accordingly transmit it to others through his writings—commentaries. His scathing criticism of Buddhists and schools of philosophy other than Shaiva with biting wit and pungent sarcasm is perhaps the most original content of what he has written.

His brief yet most pregnant definition of "Trika" definitely portrays his mastry over this system:—

शिवशक्तिसंघट्टात्मकं परत्रिकशब्दवाच्यम् ।[3]

"The unison of Shiva (Paramashiva) and "Shakti" (Para Shakti) is termed as supertrika".

1. *Ishwara Pratyabhijna, Vimarshini I- 208, 209.*
2. *Tantraloka— I- 50.*
3. *Tantraloka— I- 7.*

Very succinctly he also lays down the aim of this Shastra— "The removal of veil of ignorance."[1] However, the fundamental difference between the Vedanta and Shaivism though professing the same aim, is real rather than apparent. In Vedanta the negation of the facts of experience are a must presupposition for realization of the self; The illusion regarding the snake and rope is quite known. But in Trika there is no negative approach towards the universe but in fact an affirmation of the facts of experience with new interpretation. With this positive understanding of the environs, the realizer is simply face to face with self–recognition which in Shaiva-terminolgy is callcd self – realization.

While dealing with Pratyabhijna (self-recognition) Guru Somananda defines it as the two fold function of perception and rememberance in its totality at the same time. Utpala Deva thinks that the term Pratyabhijna connotes, the power of self, the power of cognition and power of action— a triple amalgm:

द्रक्क्रियात्मिकाशक्ति ।[3]

In this realm also Abhinavagupta shows his originality in defining the term "Pratyabhijna" as:—

तस्य महेश्वरस्य प्रत्यभिज्ञा प्रतीपं आत्माभिमुखेन ज्ञानं प्रकाश: प्रत्यभिज्ञा ।[4]

"Recognition of that supreme self is to be face to face with what was forgotten through effulgence (of consciousness).

1. *Ishwara Pratyabhijna. V. I. 35.*
2. *Shivadrishti- iv - 118 - 120.*
3. *Ishwara Pratyabhijna Karika- 3*
4. *Ishwara Pratyabhijna, Vimarshini— I - 20.*

While explaining the word Pratipam (प्रतीपं) he very lucidly says that " (it) means that which was forgotten, or concealed but now coming into view not through rememberance but by clear cognition. "

Furthermore to make it more lucid, Abhinavagupta explains that cognition is composed of:—

भातभासमानरूपानुसंधानात्मिका ।[1]

"When the past perception and the present perception are revived (by the object coming in full view)".

Giving an example of past perception and present perception and their getting revived he says:—

स एवायं चैत्र इति ।

"He is that very Chaitra" (name of a person, - who was already seen befor). His coming face to face now is called present perception and his cognition (that he is really the same person) was done by the previous or past perception, the bridge between the perceptions being rememberance born of mental impression (संस्कार). Our author's independent thinking can very easily be inferred from an ingenious definition of Pratyabhijna.[2]

Herein he does not follow his preceptor but provides a very homely definition, when he says that the Lord is possessed of Infinite Powers (पूर्णशक्ति स्वभाव:). This characteristic of Him is corroborated extensively by Puranas, Siddhantas and Agamas as

1. *Ibid- page 20.*
2. *Ishwara pratyabhijna Vimarshini Page 21.*

also by reasoning and inference etc. When by direct experience we ascertain His Nature in our own self, this may be termed as having recognized Him, or in other words, the cognition takes place.

Abhinavagupta does not consider remembrance the only vehicle of identifying the present perception with the past one, Even though Somananda explicitly lays down the role of rememberance in connecting the present and past perception and Utpala also endorses it; Abhinavagupta comments :

पुनः अभिमुख्येन, न तु स्मर्यमानतया अपितु स्फुटत्वेन ज्ञानं प्रत्यभिज्ञाम् ।[1]

"But being face to face and not by remembering alone, the knowledge (perception) because of being made clear, Recognition takes place."

He very cogently argues that rememberance is related to sight; first having seen a certain object we are reminded of it when some such form crosses our eyes. But there are cases of falling in love without seeing each other[2], wherein the medium of arousing love and accepting the lover from the depths of heart is confined to "either the words of female messenger or confidante or the perception of such traits in him (as being her ideal) or by any other deeds which made him renowned, she is persuaded to accept him".[3] Here in this case दृष्ट (sight) has played no part, hence the image which first sight would have caught cannot be repeated at the subsequent sights. The rememberance is altogether absent in it. The master-

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1. *Ishwara Praty bhijna Vimarshini I, 44.*
2. *As in the case of Nala and Damaynati, the messenger being "Hamsa."* 3. *I.P.V. II, 275.*

philosopher goes on to argue that in this case the love-lorn lady naturally weaves the pictures of his beauty, gallantry or any other exceptional distinction on the authority of three sources mentioned above. This picture will definitely be at variance with the one if the lover meets her incognito. There is no repetition of image as in the case of "Chaitra" (given earlier), how will the recognition take place? Abhinavagupta raising the controvercy himself provides a most plausible answer to this predicament. When incognito hero is introduced as lover whom she has been loving for his qualities all along, the heroine receives a shock instead of joy. As long as the qualities of the hero are not revealed to her and she certifies these by her own experience and also on the authenticity of others "He is that very person" the recognition is not so simple and easy. Hence the obstruction between what has been heard and what is actually seen is to be removed, so that the identification between the "imaginary" and the "real" is possible. Thus at this juncture the recognition is possible only by the removal of the veil as also the reconciliation between both the mental images one imaginary or unseen and the other seen or face to face[1]. Accordingly Abhinavagupta supplements the rememberance (स्मरण) with (अनुभव) cognition derived from personal observation or experience. On the seeming contradition between unity and plularity, Utpaladeva contends that:—

तत्र अन्तरं सत्त्वमेकम् ।[2]

"The internal reality of things of diverse nature is unity",

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1. *I. P. V. 1. 20, 21.* 2. *I. P. Karika II, 2.*

तदेवन्द्रियवेद्यतां संप्राप्य ।

"That very unity attaining the knowledge or perception of senses."

अनेकतां याति देशकालस्वभावतः ।

" gets multiplied under the influence of time, space and real nature of objects." Like an original thinker Abhinavagupta makes it more clear and simple by saying :

अथ व्यपदेशमात्रं एतत् कारणं अकारणं च ।

"The cause or no cause are one and same, so unity and plurality can be the attributes of one and same object."

नीलं पीतं अविकल्पकंसविकल्पमित्यपि

सर्वं मायापदे व्यवहारमात्रम् ।[1]

(So, in essence the objects internally are one consciousness, but practically speaking as being differentiated by the blue and yellow (colours) unchangeable indeterminate or determinate imply multiplicity externally at the illusory level."

It will be pertinent here to allude to the aim of the system of philosophy as preached by Abhinavagupta. The unavoidable preamable to every philosophic thought is to describe the why and what of that what teacher or preacher wishes us to know. In the treatment of this subject Abhinavagupta sets norms of (स्वसंवित्) personal experience तर्क (reasoning) and thirdly the पतिशास्त्र (scripture) and in the context of these he tries to explain the domain of his experience. Herein he exhibits a marvellous sense of independent judgment. He does not accept the theories of Logicians as given in Nyaya Shastra, or as expounded in Vaishesika in details or fundaments. From the dualism

1. *I.P.V. II, 35-36.*

of Sankhya, idealism of Baudhas and monism of Vedanta he only differs mostly in fundamentals. According to him the world of experience is not God-made nor a portion of Prakriti (Sankhya) nor purely a subjective experience (Baudhas), nor even a mere illusion (Vedanta). It is real as it is a manifestation of superself or universal consciousness. In support of his theory he introduces the Abhasa Vada, which to define most briefly in his own words :[1]

"All that is i.e. all that can be said to exist in any way and with regard to which the use of any kind of language is possible be it the subject, the object or the means of knowledge or the knowledge itself, is Abhasa."

He further contends that subject and object cannot be divorced from each other, so the self also from the not-self. Knowledge of objects is the inter-mixture of the both, if these are treated as separate and opposite entities, there cannot be any concordance between these just as between light and darkness. Hence Abhinavagupta most cogently supplies the answer:—

सर्वाकृति: विश्वमय: निराकृति: विश्वोत्तीर्णः

"The (ultimate) in form is immanent and without form is transcendental"[2]

In order to discriminate between His two aspects-transcendental and immanent-Vimarsha is the inevitable instrument. It could have been compared to the image-

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1. *I P.V. 35-36.* 2. *Tantraloka, Commentary I, 105.*

reflecting nature of a mirror, but during darkness images cannot be reflected, hence it needs external agents to illumine it. But the self does not need any such illuminater and can receive images by virtue of his self - independence "Svatantraya."

This Abhasa in its immanent विश्वमय: aspect is composed of "Prakasha" and "Vimarsha" प्रकाशविमर्शमय:।

In Shaiva terminology by "Prakasha" is meant residual traces also which are essentially the same as their substratum.[1] As has been said above, these images being reflected are the same as Prakasha - the cause of reflection-light-in the ordinary sense. This "Prakasha" is definitely synonymos with "Sanskara". "Vimarsha" may be explained as the power of self to know it- in all its purity and not being obssessed by affections whatsoever.

Abhinavagupta has most successfully made his point in this field by saying:

सर्वा: शक्ति: कंतृत्वशक्तिऐश्वर्यात्मा समाक्षिपति सा च विमंशरुपा इति युक्तम् ।

"This Self - Dependence (Svatantraya) faculty is essentially the power of action, which propells the "bliss of consciousness" and that may be taken as Vimarsha, its proponderence is quite appropriate."[2]

This word "Svatantraya" has been given other names also by the Preceptors of Shaivism. Vasugupta

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1. *Dr. K. C. Pandey. Abhinavagupta— an Historical and Philosophical study- page 200.*
2. *I. P. V. I, 198* 3. *I. P. V. I, 214.*

calls it "Chaitanya"[1] being associated with "Chita" -mind. The Spanda school takes it as "Sphurta" or Spanda[2]. It is also called as "Mahasatta"[3] and Para-vak.[4] This extraordinary interest in this faculty of "Svatantraya" by Shaiva teachers only proves as to what importance they attach to it. Perhaps it will be pertinent to relate here the conception of "Maya" as propounded by "Shaivas" and what personal contribution has been made by Abhinavagupta to illustrate and explain it.

"Maya" has been treated as a force of obscuration.[5]

तिरोधानंकरी मायाभिधा पुनः

It is more precisely born of the limited experience and so the perception of that universal experience gets blurred hence called "Ashudhavan" the path of impurity, as also the Mayadhavan, the course of Maya.

However, Abhinavagupta, gives a very concise yet pregnant definition of "Maya" by saying that "Maya" is the unmixed part of that transcendental self which engenders he shade of distinction (भेदावभास:) in His "Svatantraya" power bereft of any kind of aids.[6] Moreover this very faculty infatuates (मोहयति) hence may be equated with Moha (embarrasment). Hence he says (मायाविमोहिनी नाम) (Maya is the name of seduction). By the introduction of the word "Moha" as an equivalent of Maya it

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1. Shivasutra I, i. 2. I. P. V. I, 208. 3. Ibid-I, 209,
4. Ibid-I, 203. 5. Ishwara Pratyabhijna-MI, I, 7.
6. Tantraloka-VI-116 and I.P.V. I, 35.

becomes very easy for the layman even to understand it in essence, the Moha of Arjuna being very well known.[1] This Maya not only conceals the true nature of things and also self, but the experience of of identity with the super-self is also obliterated. To bridge the presence of identity of the self with the superself, the Jnana (perception) plays a prominent part.

The Jnana (true perception) has been enunciated as having two aspects, Baudha (intellectual) and Paurusha (spiritual), the latter is the panacea for removing the obscuration because "the experiencer having attained the stage of Highest bliss when his animal instincts have vanished altogether.," finds that kind of perception which can differentiate between the real (यथार्थ) and the unreal (अयथार्थ).[2] Consequently the course of Maya (मायाध्वन्) is replaced by "Transparent course" (शुद्धाध्वन्).[3]

Now the idea of "Moksha" (emancipation) as conceived by the Shaivas deserves some mention. While defining "Moksha", Abhinavagupta has to say:—

स्वतन्त्रात्मातिरिक्तस्तु तुच्छोऽतुच्छोपि कश्चन ।
न मोक्षो नाम तन्नास्य पृथङ्नामापि गृह्यते ।[4]

"The purity of consciousness, devoid of significance or otherwise is not only called "Moksha" but can taken any other name also."

Proceeding further, he explains the consciousness as:

स्वरूपं चात्मनः संवित् नान्यत् ।[5]

"The state of consciousness is nothing but Supreme perception."

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1. Bhagvadgita-II Chapter. 2. Tantraloka I-78-79.
3. Ibid-VI-56. 4. Ibid I-62. 5, Ibid I-192.

From the above it is clear that "Moksha" is subjective realization of one's self and is both unilluminable (अप्रकाश्य) by any external agent and unknowable (अज्ञेय) by any means of knowledge.

It is super - transcendental state of experience. The three impurities of Maya (मायीयमला:) comprising perception, action and innate ignorance (Anava)[1] are to be surpassed as a whole. The predominance of Jnana (perception) is treated as a means of emancipation by other systems of Indian philosophical thought too,[2] but Shaivas do not subscribe to this view in totality. They contend that even if the Jnana impurity is conquered, still the realizer cannot be treated as having been liberated (मुक्त) in real sense ofthe term, in as much as, the two remaining impurities still persist in him. Hence the perfect freedom according to Trika can be got only through cognition— when all these three impurities get dissolved simultaneously into that supreme soul (Samvit)[3]

Finally, the image of Abhinavagupta as a philosopher can remain incomplete if his arguments to refute various theories of Buddhists, Sankhyas, Naiyayikas and others are not reproduced here. Among the four schools of Buddhistic philosophy only two Sautantrikas and Vijnanvadins have been singled out for criticism by Abhinnvagupta,

The first school argues that perception is momentary, since everything is momentary. The object

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1. Ibid VI-60. 2. The Buddhists, Sankhyas etc.
3. Tantraloka I-192.

of perception just as a घटः (jar) etc. ceases to exist immediately after casting it reflection on the eye and other sense-organs. By inference it can be established that the object and its reflection cannot co-exist. The one being the cause and the other the effect.[1]

Abhinavagupta proceeds most intelligently to smash this verbose of Buddhist argumentative acumen.

"This external object is prone to perception, if this is not the case then no inference can be drawn even. From the rising smoke the inference of fire is quite clear, but the fire as such has already caught our perception in our kitchen or elsewhere.[2]" So it becomes quite clear that object cannot be detached from the subject. If these two are divided, then the question of building a bridge from one to another is very difficult.[3]

The Vijnanavadins (sensationalists) do no at all believe in the existence of the external world. Acc- to them self - consciousness is momentary and proceeds in the form of a chain or a stream. The links in chain are the "Vasanas, which "generate numerous sensations, called as daily cognitions. Hence a cognition is nothing but a presentiment प्रवृत्ति brought about by Vasana.[4] Abhinavagupta proceeds to refute this theory by vomitting out the contradiction inherent in this theory in as much as this school of Buddhistic philosophy divides the existenciality in two groups the real (parmartha) and the apparent (संवृत्ति) The Vijnana only is real and that is reflected in

1. I. P. V. I, 166. 2. Ibid. I- 188.
3. I. P. V. I. 190.
4. Ibid- I- 167.

it (आभासते) has only an apparent entity. The learned Shaiva commentator further contends logically that even if the apparent be unreal but its causes or source is to be admitted as real; but how can what is nothing in itself be the cause of something? When the sensationalist brings in the Vasana element he merely repeats what the Bahayarthavadin means by object (अर्थ). How can even Vasana be the cause of presentiments which have no variety in themselves, and if each stream of self-consciousness is different from the rest, if the sensation caused by its own Vasana is exclusive and independent of each other, then each soul will be living in a world of its own and there would be no collaboration of many individuals in respect of the same object for instance carrying a heavy log.[1]

Furthermore, Abhinavagupta proceeds to dismantle the house of sand built by Mimamsakas whose chief exponent is said to be Kumarila Bhatta. His Prakatatavada (प्रकटतावाद) lays down that the relation between the subject and object is b r o u g h t about by the "movement of the knowing - self and is an object of internal perception." He takes knowledge to mean simply an act of cognisor which engenders (ज्ञातता) perception and (प्रकटता) manifested state in the object.

"ज्ञानं नाम क्रिया, सा च फलानुमेया, फलं च प्रकटताख्यं विषयधर्मः, सव वेद्यता इति कुमारिलः प्रोचुः ।"

Abhinavagupta proceeds to remark that Kumarila being a dualist cannot conceive the self-effulgent nature

1. I. P. V. I, 174. 2. I. P. V. I, 155.

of knowledge. If the subject and object have an exclusive existence at the time of cognition and at the stage of manifestation, this is a part of the object exactly as are the other qualities such as blackness, in the case of a jar; but it should be manifest to all and not to a few, as can be inferred from what Kumarila says.[1] In this way, if a jar is made by a potter– its creator— then as the mimamsakas contend it should only become manifest (प्रकट) to him alone. So this theory of (प्रकटतावाद) manifestedness is not tenable as it cannot explain the fact of individual experience.

The Naiyayika's theory of knowledge consists in taking it as the illuminator of the object illuminated. The knowledge can be taken as the lamp which makes the object manifest:—

ज्ञानस्यार्थप्रकाशत्वं ननु रूपं प्रदीपवत् ।

This example of lamp for knowledge is not appropriate. The lamp shines independently without having any kind of relation with any object it illuminates; knowledge is not so, It cannot be divorced from its antecedents. Moreover while imparting its light to the object actually transfers its own luminosity to it, because as we know that the appearance of the object is dependent on the light, but the Naiyayikas do not hold that knowledge can affect the object, so it cannot hold water in view of the refutation given above. Now we turn over to Sankya system of philosophy which lays down that (बुद्धि) intellect is composed of three qualities– Sattva (transparence), Rajas (mobility) and Tamas (inertia). However, the content of "Sattva" (transparance) is predoiminant in it, so it is spotless by Nature (स्वभावत: नैर्मल्या). So it can receive reflection on all sides. It is like a mirror wherein the light of self - luminous

1. I. P. V. 1-156.

self within and the reflection of an object outside become one.[1] The बुद्धिवृत्ति (The aid of the intellect) has been refuted by Abhinavagupta as follows:—

The example of mirror and jar on which this theory is based is not correct, because according to this, then the reflecting agent and reflected object should be similar in their nature (स्वभाव साम्य). Actually it is not the case; the बुद्धि (intellect) is (सप्राणा) sentient and the other (अप्राण) insentient. They are definitly opposite to each other. Secondly even Sankhya will never admit that (नैर्मल्यं) (Transperance), of intellect (बुद्धि) is more than that of the self आत्मन्, such as the reflection of a flame in a mirror or that of the sun in the water; it cannot even satisfactorily answer that Buddhi with the light of the Luminous-self does itself become light or not. So the separate identity of बुद्धि (intellect) from the self is never possible, hence this theory does not cut much ice.[2] So his verdict 'जाड्येनार्थप्रकाशता' the insentient cannot have the capacity to manifest the objects, cannot stand any review whatsoever. It is definitely logically true and convincing.

Abhinavagupta does not even spare the "Dualist Shaivas" from his trenchent criticism. According to this Dualistic school of Shaivism[3] whose chief Advocate is Khetapala, the ignorance is a veil which conceals the perfection of self (आवरणात्मना) in respect of powers of knowledge (ज्ञान) and action (क्रिया). Accordingly each soul by its separate variety of power

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1. *I. P. V, 1,77.* 2. *Ibid 1,77.*
3. *Tantraloka, commentary VIII, 49.*

cannot come face to face with that perfection which has been actually hidden by this (power etc), when this concealing power of ignorance is shattered by Divine grace (शक्तिपात:) in the case of a soul, then only the soul retains its former glory.

Abhinavagupta begins the refutation with a pertinent inquiry as to what can be the reason of the destruction or otherwise of this ignorance. It can not be action (क्रिया) because it is acknowledged to be the cause of pleasant or unpleasant experience which a person enjoys or suffers. Lord's will cannot be also responsible for this because He is above partiality. He will not free some and imprison others. The second pertinent query made by Abhinavagupta is to the effect that what and how this ignorance conceals? Souls have been called eternal and unchanging, so ignorance cannot conceal these; if we concede this, then the souls will have to become transitory. If it can affect the changeless souls, then the liberated soul of even "Shiva". cannot remain unaffected by the concealing power of knowledge and action. If this will be the case, the cognition of self can never take place. Hence this theory is not only self-contradictory but also deluding.[1]

In this scholarly way Abhinavagupta has very intelligently pointed to "Achilles heel" inherent in each of these systems of philosophy and has unerringly established the superiority of his faith over all others. He has no mercy, no compunction in riding rough-shod over the "premise" of his rivals. Their seemingly convincing arguments cannot bear the inherent supermacy

1. Tantraloka - commentary VIII-30.

of his thought as also of his diction, and get melted like snow before the scorching rays of the sun.

Abhinavagupta like a true son of the soil, does not advocate a fanatical devotion to his line of thinking. He allows us every right to differ from him, but the irrestible charisma of his thought, couched in dignified language– does definitely enthral us. To speak squarely, he pleads for facing life and not fleeing from it. Like a practical thinker he exhorts us to eschew the meaning of life and afterwards yoke ourselves to redeem it in its truest possible perspective. His positive attitude to life and universe makes the existence more meaningful and hence rewarding.

He does not preach to discard the world and disown its attendant responsibilities, because it is essentialy real. He instead of it, asks us to recognize ourselves in the image of the Lord who is not at all different from us. A person ought to develop true perception— healty attitude for looking at his environment— then only he can recognise Him in himself and become likewise self-effulgent. The distance between the "ideal" and "real" can be easily fathomed by cognition when the mind is prepared to receive and emit images like an unblurred mirror.

Abhinavagupta performed his mission admirably and saved the humanity from the Jig-saw of intellectual acrobatics of Buddhist theology, culminating in शून्यवाद (nothingness), and in the same way from the Jargon of other systems of Indian philosophy which neither preach practical approach nor practical thinking, only telling us to reject the "present" just to prepare for "future". But Abhinavagupta affirms the existence

of the present and treats it not as a means but as an end itself. Living in the present, taking life as it comes, taming it by the strength of perception and cognition is a sound prescription for the strife-torn world even at prssent, when its restiveness can easily be converted into quiet calm of super - soul.

His attitude to life and its chief actor-man— is summed up in this couplet; which he has understandably quoted from the Shastras :—

यस्य हस्तो च पादो च मनश्चैव च सुसंयतम् ।
विद्या तपश्च शीलं च स तीर्थफलमश्नुते ॥[1]

"He, whose hands, feet, mind, learning, religious austerity, and conduct are well balanced (restrained), enjoys the fruits of piligrimage (even without going there)".

So, this Kashmiri philosopher weaning philosophy away from the mire of impracticability lives up to his name Abhinava (अभिनव), New from all angles, and his thought-provoking treatises breathe an air of ravishing freshness, (अभिनव) even after a lapse of more than ten centuries.

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1. Gitartha Sangraha, 17th, 2.

Ksemendra— the peoples' poet.

SANSKRIT poets and literary luminaries have been often accused of oriental hyperbole. It may be conceded that by and large such devotees of Muse did indulge in some kind of exaggeration which became naseauating at times; such kind of poetic fancy becomes pronounced when they had to extol their patrons, heroes or even their beloveds. Kings whose munificence made such kind of poets as mercenaries, so to say, have been equated with the lord of the gods— Indra, while they had no intrinsic merit of their own. People at large have been by-passed and no direct reference has been made to them. Even the prince among poets Kalidasa has revelled in the description of Raghu or Dilipa but has forgotten altogether his subjects over whom they ruled. Aja sheds torrents of tears for his beloved wife Indumati, but not a single drop has been reserved for the underdog whom he exploited to live in luxury.[1]

Happily for us, a Kashmiri Brahmin "Ksemendra" by name has striven to wash off this stigma attached in general to Sanskrit poets and has tried his versatile pen on the people in general. This is not a mean achievement in the context of the standards and norms of poetry- writing prevalent at that time. Even the Rhetoricians[2] had laid it down that the hero of a Mahakavya should be a god, saint or a man of

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1. *Raghuvamsha......Ajavilapa*
2. *Sahitya Darpana (Kavi Raja Vishwanatha).*

exceptional attainments. To rise in revolt against such time-honoured conventions needs self - confidence of highest order. Ksemendra did not err in his duty towards his brethren and though being a rebel did initiate a very healthy trend in the sanskrit literary tradition. He made heroes and heroines of ordinary mortals in flesh and blood- the courtesan, the clerk, the miser and many others culled from ordinary life. He did not believe in portraying the ideal, at the same time not being averse to it. He in a most realistic manner could feel the ground underneath his feet. The throbs, sighs, sobs, joys and sorrow of the man in the street have been woven in dexterous verse pulsating with innate sincerity by him only to point out that the distance between the "ideal" and the "actual" needs to be bridged, and perfection being an adage only found in text books on morality, approximation to that ideal should guide us as to the inherent merit or otherwise of the people of whom he was one.

In an extant reference to Ksemendra found in Kalhana's Raja Tarangini,[1] his talent as a poet has been praised but his acumen for historicity played down:—

केनाप्यनवधानेन कविकर्ममरिा सत्यपि ।
श्रंशोपि नास्ति निदोर्षः क्षेमेन्द्रस्य नृपावलौ ॥[2]

"Because of somewhat carlessness, not a single fraction of the Ksmendra's Nrpavali is free from blemishes, even though it is the work of a poet."

Kalhana having seen the 'list cf kings' could

1. *Book 1, 13.*
2. *Ibid.*

Kalhana having seen the "list of kings" could glean mistakes in it from the point of view of a chronicler, but unfortunately this book was lost to the posterity, hence no judgement whatsoever can be passed on it except relying on Kalhana who acknowledges Ksemendra's right to be a poet. However, in the Colophon to the 'Samaya Matrika', Ksemendra has written that he finished that work during the reign of Ananta in the 25th year of the Laukika era. Again in "Suvratta - Tilakam" he reiterates that he wrote in the reign of king Ananta and finally in 'Dasavataracaritam' he says that he finished this assignment in the reign of Kalasha, son of Ananta, the year being 41 Saptarsi era. So it is abundantly clear that he did at least see the rule of two kings- Ananta and his son Kalasha. Again in his 'Bharatamanjari' he has alluded to his being the pupil of Abhinavagupta from whom he learnt Alamkara Shastras. The date of this shaiva philosopher and commentator— Abhinavagupta cannot be later than 1014 A.D. because he wrote his bigger commentary on the Pratyabhijna Darshana in 1014 A.D.[1] At that time Ksemendra studied at his feet. So we can safely assume that Ksemendra must have been born at least 20 or 25 years before this date so as to develop his comprehension in receiving the tuition from Abhinavagupta; Hence his date of birth can roughly be placed in the last quarter (towards its end) of the 10th century. His explicit mention of Ananta and his son Kalasha only might give some clue as to his death or

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1. *Pt. Madhusudan Koul, in his introduction to "Deshopadesha and 'Narma Mala', Kashmir series of texts and studies No. 40, page 20.*

retirement from creative literature. He does not mention any other king after Kalasha which proves that he was not destined to see the reign of the successor to Kalasha. The year in which he finished the "Dasavatarcaritam' has been given as 41 Saptarsi era which corresponds 1066 A. D.[1] After this date he either sought respite from literary pursuits or was cut short in life by death. He went to Tripuresha mountain for spending his old age there and probably breathed his last at the Ashrama he had built over there. King Kalasha reigned from A.D. 1073 - 1089 and it can fairly be assumed that Ksemendra cast off his corporal frame after A. D. 1066 and not in any case later than A.D 1089. Between these two limits his date of death can be cogently placed. This Tripuresha or Tripureshvara was held in great reverence in olden days as Kalhana alludes repeatedly to it for its sanctity[2] King Avantivarman also passed his last days on this Tirtha.[3] Nilamata purana also mentions it as a place of piligrimage.[4] This has been identified as 'Triphar' on route to Mahadeva shrine, some 4 miles from the headworks of the present 'Harvan' to the North-East. A stream known as Tripuraganga is still visited by the piligrims going to Mahadeva which flows close to modern Triphar.[5] Even though it has lost its

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1 *In Kashmir Laukika era is to be counted from 25th year of the Kaliyuga while the Christian era has a difference of 1000 years + 25 (Kaliyuga) with it, S, 41 Saptarsi or Laukika would come to 1025 + 41 = 1066 AD.*

2. *Raja- V, 46, VI, 135, VII, 151, 526, 956.* 3. *Ibid- V-123.*

4. *1323* 5. *Dr. Stein, Introduction to Raja, Page 455.*

fame now, yet Shrivara[1] has mentioned about a 'Anna-sattra' started by king Zain-u-Ab-Din (Bud Shah) at this Tirtha. This may be the permanent "Langar' of those days started for feeding the needy and might prove that during the Muslim rule also it had retained its renown as a holy place.

Ksemendra unlike other Sanskrit poets does not feel shy of publicity. In the colophons of his various works he acquaints us fully with his lineage; piecing together all these facts given by the author himself, we can conveniently build his family tree. His grandfather's name was 'sindhu' being the son of 'Narendra' a minister of Jayapida, grandson of Lalitaditya[2]

He was a very strong and benevolent king of Kashmir and was named Vinayaditya also especially on his coins.[3] His father's name was Prakashendra. He seems to have been born in affluence as the family surname of "Indra" most eloquently testifies to. His father was of very liberal disposition and made handsome gifts to Brahmins. He subscribed to Shaiva cult hence installed many Shiva lingas at Svayam[4] near Nichihama in present Handwara Tehsil, and spent some 25 lakh rupees for endowment purposes. Like his father Ksemendra also built an Ashram at Triphar and retired there in his old age[5]. His son was "Somendra" and being talented like his versatile parent wrote an introduction

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1. *Zaina Tarangini I-402.*
2. *Raja, IV-359.*
3. *Coins of Medieval India. page 45*
4. *Originally 'Svaymbhu, Raja, I-34.*
5. *See earlier.*

to the "Avadana-Kalpalata".

Fortunately for us, the family tree of Ksmendra unmistakably illustrates that this family had preference for Sanskritic names and not local names, whose meaning at present cannot be made out like those of Kalhana, Bilhana and Mamatta, etc. "Khema"[1] in Sanskrit means "eternal happiness"[1] and Indra[2] means a "lord". So the name taken together means "Lord of eternal happiness, which he really was, as his compositions fully portray. He did not confine this happiness only to himself but dispensed it profusely among his fellow-countrymen by composing humorous skits and witty character sketches in "Deshopadesa" and "Narmamala". He lived perfectly up to his name.

His verstile genuis has flowered in many directions. Dr. Keith[3] called him a polymath while Dr. Stein[4] has appended the epithet polymister with his name; This tribute goes a long way in establishing that he did not confine himself to a single form of literary expression but tried his pen over many other forms with equal force and effect. However, in all humility he calls himself 'Vyasadasa'[5] the servant of Vyasa of Mahabharata fame. Knowledge has given him humility (विनय) in every sense of the word. Even though like Vyasa he was a prolific writer, yet he refrains from equating himself with him; he does scale the virgin heights of literary

1. *V.S. Apte, Sanskrit English Dictionary.*
2. *Ibid.* 3. *History of classical sanskrit literature.*
4. *Raja- Introduction.* 5. *In the colophons of 'Samaya Matrika' and his other compositions.*

expression, yet does not boast about this; but ascribes it to the blessings of Vyasa whose slave he becomes willingly. The ego in him remains subdued as should be the case with every literary giant.

However, it is to be conceived rightly that though Ksemendra's father was a devout Shaiva and he himself received tuition from Abhinavagupta— a Shavitie stalwart— yet he got converted to Vaishnavism by the efforts of Somapada.[1] It also seems that he had more respect for this Somabhagvata than even for Abhinavagupta. Moreover, he kept his mind open and studied Bhuddism also. Perhaps his awake intuition first of all thought of including Buddha among the ten incarnations of Vishnu.[2] Some faint echoes of ridiculing Shaivism can also be gleaned from his compositions especially in 'Deshopadesha' and 'Naramamla'. But despite all his flirations with Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Bhuddism, he was a firm believer in the religion of Shrutis (Vedas) and Smritis.[3]

Before we proceed to discuss his literary acumen as a polymath, it seems pertinent to refer to a controversy raised by Prof. Peterson regarding the identity of Kesemendra and by mistake confusing him with Kshemraja— the renowned commentator of Shaiva lore[4]. However, on second thoughts he revised his earlier opinion, and in this way the dust raised by this confusion got settled. Perhaps this wrong inference is due to the fact that both these Kshe-

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1. *Referred to in 'Brhat Katha Manjri'.*
2. *"Dashavatarchaita" Canto Ix.*
3. *As given in his "Charucharya".*
4. *Journal of Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XVI.*

maraja and Ksemendra acclaim Abhinavagupta as their teacher. Ksemendra has provided a veritable hint as to his real identity as much as he prefixes the epithet "Vyasadasa" invariably with his name while Kshemaraja does not have any such appellation. The latter is silent about his pedigree but the former has written profusely about his lineage. Hence it can be easily understood that the two have had separate identity.

Broadly speaking Ksemendra's immense literary activities can be divided into four distinct traits:

a) As a condenser of very lengthy epic - literature and other religious Kavyas.

b) As a Historian. c) As a satirist. d) As a writer on Rhetorics, poetics and metres.

Under the first head, his summaries of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Brhatkatha of Gunadya, 'Deshavatar-charita' and 'Baudha-vadanakalpalata' are note worthy.

By epitomizing the Brhatkatha written originally in paishachi, he did a great service to the literary tradition of Sanskrit literature. The original having been lost, but Ksemendra's translation into sanskrit has served admirably to retrieve that irreparable damage, and so he is looked upon as the originator rather than the translator of this famous story-literature. Soma Deva Bhatta[1] also prepared a second version of Brhat Katha in Sanskrit after him which proves that this kind of literature on the pattern of Arabian Nights had become very popular with the

1. *"Katha Saritsagara."*

people.

Brhat Katha Manjari[1] deals with amors and heroism of various kings especially the king Udyana. It has nineteen Lamabakas (cantos). The poetry employed is not of high order and in the words of Dr. Buhler may be called "verified prose".[2] Ramayana Manjary[3] and Mahabharata Manjari[4] are obviously the shorter versions of Ramayana and Mahabharata— the epic literature of India respectively. In the latter a glaring omission is perceptible. He has altogether omitted the chapters 342–353 of the Shanti Parva. On a perusal of the Ramayana Manjari it is quite clear that he follows Valimiki in a most faithful way and has even alluded to minor incidents be it by a single phrase or a single sentence.[5] So, how this striking omission can be explained? perhaps in the eleventh century the Shantiparva did not form the part of Mahabharata and might have been interpolated subsequently.

One fact comes to surface while discussing the Manjari literature of Ksemendra. He retains the original name of the text he has chosen for being summarized and appends the word 'Manjari' to it. "Manjari" might mean a sprcut, cluster of blossoms, a flower-bud or a creeper.[6] in this way he has very intelligently suggested that his smaller edition is like a creeper to the original and imposing tree of Ra-

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1. *Kavyamala series, 69.*
2. *Kashmir Report.*
3. *Kavyamala series, 83.* 4. *Kavyamala series 28.*
5. *Dr. Surya Kanta, Ksemendra studies.*
6. *Sir M. Williams, Sanskrit English Dictionary.*

mayana, Mahabharata etc. He has like a deft gardener prunned the extraneous and redundant foliage around these trees and carved out of these a cluster of blossoms, even though smaller in volume, but all the more prettier in appearance. As a translator of Brhat Katha, his translation from Paisachi into Sanskrit was definitely subservient to the contents of the original. He could not take any liberty with it; with such shortcomings even, Ksemendra's mastry over sanskrit is unblesmished. So it is wrong to judge his poetic prowess from his "Manjari" literature. His independent works only can be the touch-stone to test his talents as a poet. We will come to this point later.

'Baudhavadana-kalpa-lata', is a collection of Jataka tales. On the authority of the poet's son "Somendra" Ksemendra composed only 107 Pallavas (Chapters), to which his worthy son added one more, making it the auspicious number of 108. Unfortunately the first 40 Chapters of this compendium were lost but luckily were retrieved from its Tibetan translation, when Shakya - Shri a Kashmiri Pandit presented a copy of it to the Lama of Tibet in 1202 A.D. He got it translated into Tibetan some seventy years after i.e. 1272 A.D.[1] Ksemendra also acknowledges the debt of one "Virya Bhadra' an authority on Buddhistic texts who assisted him in composing this treatise.

"**Dashavatarcharita**" as the name suggests contains anecdotes regarding various incarnations of Vishnu;

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1. *Dr. Sarat Chander Das, Bibilothica Indica.*

though Ksemendra does display a rare kind of ingenuity in dealing with this religious topic, yet it cannot be termed to be his original work; first 9 cantos are definitely derived from Puranas. Novelty of conception is discerned in the 7th canto wherein "whole of the Ramayana is narrated with Ravana as the central figure".[1] The result is quite happy and vividness of description adds to its charm. This novelty of conception is further more w i t n e s s e d in his extolling Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu. The inherent attitude of an Indian thinker believing in synthesis is seen at the work here. Herein the Hindu view of life assimilating all that is good from any source whatsoever, has come in handy to the poet. So, the rebel against Hinduism as such—the Buddha has been admitted to the fold of Hindu pantheon which proves not only the catholicity of Hindus but also their wakefulness.

When the symbol of revolt–Buddha was equated with Rama, Krishna etc. the edge of proselytisation started by his followers got blunted. The wind was taken out to their sails, not by force, not by persecution e i t h e r, but by owning him. In this way Hindus got one more incarnation and propitiated him in the form he detested the most. His followers definitely stood to lose in the bargain while Hindus gained everything—their culture, their way of thinking remaining in tact. Imperceptible e r o s i o n took place in the other camp and consequently this very religion had to either get amalgmated i n the Hindu fraternity, or live in self—exile.

As a historian no estimate of his can be built as

1. *Dr. Suryakanta- Ksemendra Studies, page 19.*

his "Nrpavali" (the list of Kings) has been lost even though Kalhana did consult it for writing his Tarangini[1]. However, Kalhana has not been fair to him. He admirers his acumen as a poet, but derides it as a historian.[2] However, it is to be conceded that Kalhana while enumerating the sources of the historical data on which he built his chronicle, does mention his "list of kings" which must have commanded some respect in his time, and to justify the writing of his "Tarangini" pointed to the defects in the former "Nrpavali". In this connection it is to be remembered that even though Ksemendra undertook to write the "list of kings" but his heart definitely lay with the underdog. So he treated it in a slipshod manner. In course of time, Nature respecting his conviction, consigned the book to some forgotten corner, hence was lost. His innate progressive outlook would have compiled a "Janavali". The "List of people" instead of "The list of kings". Perhaps to atone for this omission he wrcte a number of books which do definitely come under the caption "Janavali". Royal patronage he did not want as he was sufficiently affluent himself, so could not bring himself to cater to the moonish caprices of kings.

Kalavilasa[3] may be considered the best work from the fertile pen of Ksemendra. This book consists of ten cantos and in the very first canto "Muladeva" "शतधूर्तः" (the arch cheat) is introduced and the rest of the book is devoted to the tips given by

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1. *Raja Tarangini...Book I, 13.*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Kavyamala Series- 1.*

him to his pupil Chandragupta the (सार्थवाहसुत:) caravan leader's son. Each canto deals with (दम्भ) vanity, (लोभ) greed (वेश्यावृतं) description of courtesans, (कायस्थचरितं) the character of the clerk, (मद) arrogance (गायनवर्णनं) the description of Music, (नानाधूर्तवर्णनं) description of various cheats, and lastly (सकलकलानिरुपणं) exposition of all the arts. As is clear from the titles of cantos, the poet does not refrain from exposing the weakness inherent in the society at that time. The cheats, courtesans, Kayasthas and goldsmiths epitomizing the deceit in themselves corrupt the society with the aid of vanity, greed and arrogance. His play on the word (मद) arrogance which was spelt as "दम"– restraint in the Krta - age deserves mention. In Kali - age the sequence of syllables has changed places दम: becoming मद: .

Moreover, useful information about the currency in vogue at that time is also given in this book. While describing the character of (किराट) miserly trader[1] he calls him a (दिवसचौर:) a thief in broad day light. Having plundered the customers by guile or flattery during the day, he very reluctantly parts with three cowries (वराटक) for house-hold expenses. It seems clear that the cowries were in use as a medium of currency in his time---and that also of the lowest denomination. He call वराटक cowries as a (Shvetika)[2] being of white colour also. Narrating the novel deceptive ways of gold smiths who have faulty balances for weighing gold and possess sixty four arts of cheating the people, he alludes to their birth, and

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1. II Chapter 5 — 7.

2. Samayamatrika- VIII-80.

says that they were previously nibbling at the Meru mountain as mice and cursed by gods for this insolence were born as gold - smiths on this globe.[1]

The title of this composition means the (विलास) charm or pastime of (कला) arts– the art of deception, cheating, entincing, seduction, and robbery etc.

About the depraved woman, he has this castigation :

निजपतिचपलकुरङ्गी परतरुभृङ्गी स्वभावमातङ्गी ।
मिथ्या विभ्रमभङ्गी कुटिलभुजंगी निजा कस्य ।।

"Eluding her own husband like a fawn, tasting the hospitality of another tree (not her own husband's), by nature a low-born vamp, displays false coquetry, crooked she - serpent, can be faithful to none".[2]

In the same vein the prostitute is condemned as :

इत्येवं बहुहृदया बहुजिह्वा बहुकराश्च बहुमायाः ।
तत्त्वेन सत्यरहिताः को जानाति स्फुटं वेश्या ।।[3]

"In this way, having many hearts, many tongues, many hands, and many tricks of seduction, in reality without truthfulness; no body can know the prostitute in essence.'

About the innocence of men he has this satirical compliment :

गणयति गगने गणकश्चन्द्रेण समागमं विशाखायाः ।
विविधभुजंगक्रीडासक्तां गृहिणीं न जानाति ।।[4]

"The astrologer calculating in the sky as to when

1. *Kalavilasa VIII, 25—27.*
2. *Ibid- III, 15.*
3. *Ibid- IV, 39.*
4. *Ibid- IX,6.*

the moon will enter its sixteenth mansion, does not know anything about his wife who is attached to the amors of various serpents (bad charactered men)."

The Kayastha (the scribe, clerk) who held very important post in old Kashmir and like a leech drank the blood of people has not escaped his chastisement:

कुटिला लिपिविन्यासा दृश्यन्ते कालपाशसंकाशाः ।
कायस्थभूर्जशिखरे मण्डलनीना इव व्याला: ॥[1]

"The handwriting (of Kayastha) is crooked, (fradulent, so that the actual entries made into his books are not deciphered) looking like the snares of the death-god. The Kayasthas sit on the file of the birch bark (files)[2] like serpents in a charmed circle (drawn by a conjurer)."

Samayamatrika[3] may be also called the finest composition from the versatile pen of Ksemendra. Herein the poet lays bare the seductive amors of prostitutes and their enticing acumen. In the colophon to this book the poet calls it (सुभाषितम्) by which its didatic import is suggested. The caption of the book a compound consisting of 'Samaya' time and (Matrika) mother, when taken together, may mean the "mother of the time" in that age. It was not the chaste or the virtuous lady but the ensnaring vamp—the prostitute who ruled over the hearts of men

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1. *Ibid, V-10.*
2. *In olden days the writing material was birch-bark in the North and leaves of Tala in the South (palm tree leaves).*
3. *Kavyamala series—IX.*

The times were not in any way flatteringly punctuated with piety but besmeared with sinful conquetries of the prostitutes; by bringing them to the fore and also alluding to their ghastly end, the poet does reform the society. Some critics have found Ksemendra guilty of low-taste, vulgarity and only narrating the bad points in the society.[1] However it is to be remembered in this context that Ksemendra in the first instance does not claim to be a religious preacher. He writes what he actually sees and feels. If the society was r a m p a n t with vulgarity, low taste and other evils, how could the poet be blind to these? The degradation in the society could not have remained hidden even if Ksemendra had tried to make the use of "idealistic" rather than t h e "realistic" approach to life. The filth and the mud in the society would after all raise its head had Kesmendra covered it with the sweet smelling roses of his imagination even. By screening these from public view would have all the more multiplied their intensity, hence by portraying these, the society at large hanging its head in shame, could h a v e thought of reform in right earnest. Hence the poet's intention is to reform and in no way to present the deformation of society. Hence the use of the सुभाषितम् at the end of book is quite j u s t i fi e d. Negatively if the darkness is explained in full detail, the positive reaction to it would be light, more light. As the title of the book suggests, it is a compound of 'Times' and 'Matrika' (mother) object of respect. In a sarcastic manner the author wants to convey that the harlot is the "mother of the times"

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1. *Dr Suryakanta—Ksemendra studies.*

or more respected and sought after individuals in the society, while actually the Matrikas e.g. वाराही, ब्राह्मी, चण्डी etc. should have been propitiated. The moral and mental fibre of the people at that time was so base that instead of engaging themselves in "Matrika Pujananam" they wasted time and money in वेश्यारमणम् (enjoying prostitutes). Hence in the very beginning of this treatise, Ksemendra very rightly says:

क्षेमेन्द्रेण रहस्यार्थमन्त्रतन्त्रोपयोगिनी ।
क्रियते वाररामाणामियं समयमातृका ॥[1]

Moreover, towards the end of this composition Ksemendra himself justifies the title by saying:—

समयेन मातृका सा कृत्रिमरूपा कृता कलावत्या ।
तन्नाम्नैव निबन्धः क्षेमेन्द्रेण प्रबद्धोऽयम् ॥

"In course of time (by the curse of the time) that (Kankali)— the mother was transformed into an artificial beauty by Kalāvati, associating this treatise with her name, I, Ksemendra has arranged it (into cantos)"[2]. This book also furnishes geographical data about the old salt route (salt has been always imported into the Valley) and a hospice named 'Panchala-Dhara-Matha' on it. Later on this very route and hospice were rennovated by the Mughals connecting the Valley with the plains via Pira - Panchal range. This book of verses is divided into eight cantos (Samayas). Herein the initiation of one 'Kankali' into the hierarchy of prostitutes and her various sojourns have been described. The agent for introducing her

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1. *Samaya Matrika, I–3.*
2. *Ibid- VIII-129.*

to a senior-in-trade grown up lady– hence unmarkatable is naturrally the hair-dresser– नरेषुनापितो धूर्तः— among men the barbar (hair-dresser) is the most wicked.

Charucharya[1] is actually a century of verses in Anushtubha metre. According to the author the main purpose of writing it is to teach law and polity by way of a moral couched in the first line of the verse and followed by an illustration in the second. The illustrations are mainly drawn from epics and Puranas.

'Deshopdesha' contains updeshas[2] (advice) in eight cantos regarding his innate feelings about the customs and notorious characters in the society. In the opening verses of this book the author craves for the indulgence of the readers in not construing any other meaning into his use of biting sarcasm, but only to bear with him, because he would like to reform the society through this medium :—

हासेन लज्जितोऽत्यन्तं न दोषेषु प्रवर्तते ।
जनस्तदुपकाराय ममायं स्वयमुद्यमः ॥[3]

"Being ashamed very much and not goaded by the defects (in the society), it is my attempt to reform the people through mirthful laughter."

The characters he has chosen for his chastisement are the (खलः) the villian, (कदर्यः) the miser, (वेश्या) harlot, (कुट्टिनी) the bawd, (विट्) the sexy rogue; the Gouda students having come to Kashmir for receiving tuition and the old man's marriage etc.

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1. *Kavyamala series 2.* 2. *Edited by Pt Madhusudan Koul (Shastri), Kashmir series of texts and studies No. 40.*
3. *Ibid. I-4.*

The harlot epitomizes in his words :—

मधुरधारेव वचसि क्षुरधारेव चेतसि ।
वेश्या कुठारधारेव मूलच्छेदाय कामिनाम् ॥[1]

"In her speech honeyed-sweetness, in her heart the blade of a razor, the prostitute is like a sharp edge of an axe ready to cut at the roots of her paramours."

Even though being at the right side of sixties, she polishes her face with beauty—aids like a girl in teens, verily at the commencement of the iron age, she must have taken nectar along with crows.[2]

About the foreign students especially from Gauda Pradesha (Bengal), he has this left-handed compliment :

याचते पण्यमधिकं मूल्यमल्पं प्रयच्छति ।
वणिजस्तिष्ठति पुरः प्रभाते दैशिकः कृत्तिः ॥[3]

"He demands more vendibles, but gives very little as the price, so the vendor in the morning stands before him like a local Kali (to recover the balance)."

Presumably the student given to vile practices could not be coaxed into paying the actual price being under the influence of liquor on the preceding night. He would have cooked up a brawl and even wounded the vendor with his knife.[4]

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1. *Ibid, III - 13.*
2. *Ibid, III - 33.*
3. *Ibid, VI - 24*
4. *Ibid, VI - 18.*

Moreover, the pscychology of a miser has been graphically woven by him in these words :

कदर्यः स्वजनं दृष्ट्वा यदृच्छोपपन्नं गृहे ।
करोति दारकलहव्याजेनानशनव्रतम् ॥[1]

"The miser seeing a relation of his having come to his house of his own will, under the excuse of an altercation with his wife vows not to take anything."

When the host is observing a fast; moreso under protest, how could the guest expect hospitality there. So, he takes up to his heels and in this way, the miser gets rid of him. Furthermore, Ksemendra tries to philosophise on his over-all behaviour :-

नीरसस्य कदर्यस्य माधुर्यं वचने कथम् ।
गृहे लवणहीनस्य लावण्यं वदने कुतः ॥[2]

"The dry-as-dust miser's words can never be sweet. How can be loveliness on his face when there is no salt even in his house-hold." Herein, the poet has played on the word लवण (salt) which is its abstract form may mean beauty also.

In this way, he has not spared any such despised character in society.

The Kashmiri Bhatta (Pandit as known now) having fallen from his high pedestal and addicted to vice has been painted by him as :-

मधुपाने कृतबुद्धिः कौलकथानष्टजातिसङ्कोचः ।
मत्स्यशरावकहस्तो गुरुगृहमायाति दीक्षितो भट्टः ॥[3]

1. *Ibid II.* 2. *Ibid, II - 38.* 3. *Ibid, VIII - 2.*

"The initiated Bhatta (Kashmiri Brahmin) bent upon taking liquor, being addicted to Vamachara by which the pride of his own clan has been set at naught, with a plate of fish in his hand, approaches the house of his teacher (for reading scriptures)."

This description of a Bhatta very lucidly brings home to our mind the levity obtaining in the highest caste at that time. Having forsaken the right path of worship and taking to Vamachara he has to observe the पंचमकार (five MS)[1] rule, and is so bashless that he does not care two hoots for the prestige of the community to which he belongs.

The old man's infatuation for a young girl has been very aptly summed up by the author as follows :-

"The old man begs for a virgin (in marriage) like a miser for wealth." The undertone in this simile is purposely condensed by the author by comparing the lust for a virgin of a dotard with the lust for money by the miser— who will never use it but simply keep it imprisoned in his coffers, only to feed his eyes upon.[2]

'Narma-Mala'[3] or a garland of humour and wit is actually a complement to the 'Deshopdesha.' It is divided into three Parihasas (Jokes). The main target in these is the Kayastha- clerk- who is painted

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1. मांस *(meat)*, मत्स्य *(fish)*, मदिरा *(wine)*, मैथुन *(cohabitation)*, मुद्रा *(concentration)*.
2. *Ibid, VII - 2.*
3. *Published under Kashmir Series of Texts and Sutdies, No. 40, Kashmir Research Department.*

most black. He revelles in dismantling temples, teasing Brahmins, and encouraging bribery. His life full of vice lands him into the prison ultimately, and all his ill-gotten riches and property are confiscated. His end is most tragic.

The "Then" and "Now" of the Kasyastha has been very wittily condensed in the following verse :-

या प्पौ याचितं चामं भग्नेऽश्माजने ।
तयैव पीयते रौप्यपात्रे कस्तूरिका मधुः ॥[1]

"(In former days) his wife used to drink the begged scum in a broken and second-hand stone bowl. She now takes the musk-scented wine in silver goblets."

Under the fourth head, K s e m e n d r a as a rhetorician and writer on poetics and metrics[2] composed Kavi Kanthabharana (The necklace of a poet) and Auchitya Vicharacharcha[3] (an account of propriety) and Suvratta tilakam[4] (the crest of good metres) deserves special mention. As the titles of these compositions reveal, the first is a short treatise on the making of a poet for which divine as well as human effort is necessary. The second declares the "propriety" as the soul ef poetry. The age-long predominance of Rasa (sentiments) has been subordinated by him to Auchitya (propriety). The third obviously is a work on metres. Twenty four metres are described, discussed and illustrated by him in all.

Besides these, a host of books on other subjects

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1. *Narmamala, 1 - 147.*
2. *Kavyamala Series IV.*
3. *Ibid I.* 4. *Ibid II.*

has been ascribed to Ksemendra. Late Pt. Madhusudan Kaul Shastri enumerates as many as thirty one compositions from his versatile pen.[1]

However, to build his towering image as a peoples' poet, only such uncontrovercial treatises as have been classified under different heads earlier, are sufficient.

Without mincing words, it would be expedient to judge him as a poet first and afterwards the subject he chose as a vehicle for his poetic talent will merit discussion. The most accepted definition of poetry from Eastern point of view is by Kavi Raja Vishwanatha when he says that even a single sentence cotaining Rasa (flavour or sentiment of relish) may be called poetry. Futher to pin-point the importance of Rasa he defines it as रस्यते इति रसः which tinkles or which is relished is called Rasa[2] With other constituents such as अलंकार (embellishments) गुण (qualities) etc., Rasa is acknowledged by one and all as the soul of poetry. Herein obviously the emphasis is on the content of poetry.

Ksemendra himself defines poetry as containing "Auchitya" propriety. According to him propriety has been defined as :-

"An embellishment is a real embellishment when applied at the proper place, and Gunas (merits) are actually merits when they up-hold the norms of propriety.[3] So it is clear that Ksemendra does not

1. *Introduction to 'Deshopdesha' and 'Narmamala' Kashmir Research Series 40, page 25.*
2. *Sahitya Darpana.*
3. *Auchitya- vicharacharcha.*

subscribe to Rasa theory of poetry and makes bold to give his own definition. He actually makes the poetry purposeful. Furthermore in a poetic composition when different Rasas (sentiments) are intermixed propriety alone can preserve their flavour, if this kind of discretion is not employed, then the composition would only be रस-संकर -a counter-feit mixture of sentiments.[1] The author lays emphasis on the existence of propriety in each word, sentence, figures of speech, verbs, syntax, gender, number, adjective, tense and even on other outer limbs of poetry (Kavyangas) i.e. environment, time, intuition, thought and nomenclature[2].

Therefore the difference between the Rasa school and the definition of poetry given by Ksemendra is that the former is subjective in essence and the latter is objective in comprehension. The Advocates of Rasa did definitely include propriety in merits गुण and impropriety with blemishes दोष .[3]

But Ksemendra like a realist does mark the frontiers between the two, because his judgment is objective. Before testing his merit as a poet by his own standards or by Eastern norms of criticism, it will be feasible to define poetry and also the making of a poet from western point of view also.

Wordsworth defines poetry "nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth."[4]

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1. *Ibid 17 - 18.*
2. *Ibid 8 - 10.*
3. *Like Mammatta, Vishwanatha.*
4. *Essays in Critisism, Second series.*

Herein this celebrated poet under-lines the truth which should deserve to be the subject of poetry. Another famous poet Shelley while defining poetry in a general way takes it to be the expression of imagination.[1] Coleridge makes it as anti-thesis of science having for its immediate object pleasure not truth[2]. Herein the emphasis is laid on the pleasure which should flow from a poetic composition. Thomas Carlyle declares poetry to be "musical thought"[3]. This definition is perhaps in consonance with that given by Dr. Johnson when he says that "poetry is metrical composition."[4] Both these definitions pertain to the form of poetry-other than prose. Edgar Allan Poe also echoes the same feeling when according to him poetry is "the rhythmic creation of beauty."

W. H. Hudson sees poetry "as an interpretation of life through imagination and feeling."[6]

However, from the perusal of all these definitions it is clear that poetry as such is a metrical composition pulsating with imagination and feeling, its goal being to interpret the truth or to provide pleasure. In this way the form of poetry being musical and metrical and its content either the truth or the pleasure, have been properly and proportionately located. By comparing this definition with that of the Indian critics it is patent that these are in line with the protagonists of 'Rasa' theory which definitely tinkles the emotions. With regard to Ksemendra

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1. *Defence of Poetry.*
2. *Biographia Literaria, Chapter XIV.*
3. *Heroes and Hero Worship, Lecture III.*
4. *Dictionary.* 5. *The Poetic principle.*
5. *An introduction to study of Literature.*

we have to note the didactic import in his poetry which he proclaims from the house-top. Therefore, the question arises whether a poet can be a moral teacher. He has to translate his feelings and emotions faithfully as they ooze forth in his heart and to preach morality through this medium is justified or not. To this knotty problem Sir Philip Sidney provides a cogent answer. In his "Defence of poetry' he says that a poet is a 'maker'; the Indian counter-part being 'Srishta' having the same meaning. So, it can be safely inferred that the poet does not express what already exists, but he invents—precisely the 'ideal' for the imitation of the reader in general. He (Sidney) further contends that the world created by the poet is surely better than what exists really. In the same way fiction sounds truer than the fact. The contention of Sir Sydney to put squarely is, that poet is actually a moral teacher, but Ksemendra while admitting this in toto, does not believe in his painting the ideal and thereby reform the 'actual. He would like to proceed from the 'actual' like a revolutionary and would like the reader to asses for himself 'what should have been' from 'what it is.' What he preaches on Morality is simply suggestive and not direct. Perhaps his approach is more realistic than Sir Sidney who would like us to go to the 'Real' via 'ideal'. Ksemendra believes in treating the 'Real' with its imperfections, and all the time beckoning us in undertones, and not directly, to have an eye on the 'perfect ideal'. "What should not be" can be very efficiently emphasized by "what actually is."

His conviction about the function of propriety in poetry comes to his succour in this dilemma.

Propriety according to him is n o t h i n g but a real representation of life as it obtains. Had he painted it otherwise, it would have amounted to impropriety. Hence his candid portrayal of society is an illustration of propriety in its all shades of meaning. He would not l i k e to pass on a counterfeit society for a genuine one. He believes in calling spade a spade and not confusing dross with gold. While discussing the attributes of a poet, Ksemendra in his 'Kavi Kanthabharna' has unambiguously laid down that a poet-in-the making should not seek the guidance of a logician or a grammarian because they hinder the flowering of good poetry[1]. He is alive to the fact that good poetry should in no case get f e t t e r e d in grammatical technicalities or the mental drill of logicians. It should flow like an uninterrupted stream. Moreover, he *even* goes to the extent of saying that a poet - in-the making "should neither go a - begging nor stoop to vulgarity in his narratives".[2] His imaginative faculty should not be wanting in anything and should not fall below the established norms of good-taste. So, it is clear that Ksemendra as a teacher on poetry and also as a poet does strike a happy mean between the precept and the practice; for this he has chosen the vehicle of satire.

A satire has been defined as a piece of writing which ridicules the follies and wickedness of mankind, of a class of people or of an individual. As has been made clear in the preceding pages his emphasis is on the individual– different units of society

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1. *15th verse. I.*
2. *Ibid, II, 18, Translated by Dr. Surya Kanta.*

who are a veritable cancer for its healthy growth. Hence his chastiment pulsating with sarcasm and irony does not border on vulgarity. It is a faithful representation of life. It can safely be asserted that his poetry is not a revolt against life in any sense of the word. The moral standards as should have been existent in the society— which actually are not there— form the dirge of his poetical compositions. Like Mathew Arnold he believes that 'poetry is at bottom a criticism of life.' Morality and ethical values do form an inextricable woof and warp of the texture of society, hence the poetry of revolt would be revolt against life itself. So, he does not revolt against it, but lays it bare with pungent sarcasm and seemingly 'Mirthful laughter', only to relieve its grim effect on his readers.

In the same way Ksemendra's poetry cannot be a accused of being the poetry of paradox. In a paradox the self-contradictory or absurd element is somewhat more pronounced than the truth it contains; our poet does not believe in the 'paradoxical' approach to poetry, but in its stead, prefers the direct approach which is easier to comprehend. He does not want us to solve riddles or puzzles.

Hence it is clear that his 'satire' does not subscribe either to 'revolt' or to 'paradox', in their stead, he transfers his innate feelings to the reader without any pretensions whatsoever.

It has been contended that satire is best suited to prose[1]. In it the appeal is made to reason, judgement, "it cannot be heightened by being garnished with an

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1 *The problem of style; J. M. Murray.*

appeal to emotion".[1] However, our poet has employed the more difficult medium of poetry, hence his task to produce the desired effect is more arduous than those of the prose-writers in this field. Perhaps for this very reason some critics have called his poetry as versified prose.[2] As has been shown earlier, this is sheer injustice to our poet. Like a true satirist he has to subjugate his emotions to the compelling reality around him. The wings of his imagination do get clipped consequently, so his poetry may not touch the high water-mark of Kalidasa— who has no such shortcomings and his emotions are free to take any direction whatsoever. Even then Ksemendra has yoked his poetic prowess admirably well to the exposition of the real by contrasting it with the ideal. For a satirist the method of contrast is indispensable. He may feel *piqued* at times with the gulf between the real and his dreams, yet his anger has to be screened under a mask of 'Mirthful-laughter' as Ksemendra would say himself. The satrist has to don the mantle of a moralist though he may not like it. His insistent baekoning to to ideal— appealing to the sense of right and wrong—unconsciously bestows on him the status of a moral teacher. He cannot escape from it. Hence, in his poetry the aesthetic content is naturally subserveint to the moral one. Even having such discomfitures for the full flight of his imagination, Ksemendra has tried his hardest to introduce a e s t h e t i c pleasure into it according to his own norms of propriety (औचित्य), as discussed earlier. His satire does

1. *Ibid— page 60.*
2. *Dr. Surya Kanta, Ksemend a studies. Dr. Buhler- Kashmir Report.*

show the poet in him. His compositions are even now relished with the gusto of a lyric vibrating with emotions and have never been treated as codes on Morality. Perhaps this popular reaction to his satire is a sufficient compliment to his genius as a poet of no mean order.

The very first verse of samaya Matrika introduces him as a poet by his own right :-

अनङ्गवातलास्त्रेण जिता येन जगत्त्रयी ।
विचित्रशक्तयै तस्मै नमः कुसुमधन्वने ॥

"He who has conquered three worlds by his exciting, stormy, yet formless weapons; I salute him the flower-bowed cupid, for his surpassingly wonderful prowess".

Whenever his imaginative faculty is not under the curbing thumb of content, or is free to take strides at his own will, he definitely touches the high water mark of poetic fancy. The poet in him remains subdued not that he lacks proper imagination, but by the compelling nature of the subject he has chosen, and the vehicle of shloka metre which cannot admit of any elaborate treatment because of its comparative shorter span. His vocabularly is so rich that he looks like a living Dictioary; hence he could readily and easily weave a particular situation or feeling out of the inexhaustible fund of words at his command. Words flow from his pen spontaneously and at times he does not feel diffident to use the local Kashmiri words also, perhaps to give his compositions a native colouring and flavour :— "तुम्बकबीणास्कन्धः"[1] "The flute-player has the Veena and the

1. *Deshopadesha- VIII, 30.*

'tumbak'[1] on his shoulders".

To make its Kashmiri usage more emphatic, he also uses the word 'Nara' 'नार'[2] with it. In this context many such Kashmiri words even the idioms can be gleaned from his works e.g. ताल (Tala)[3] in the sense of Sanskrit तालव्य palate, Gharaghara[4] (घघर) representing the roaring sound of clouds in Kashmiri. Not only this but even the Kashmiri colloquial taunts and abuses have also been reproduced by him faithfully in sanskrit.

To crown all, his similies and other figures of speech are not only apt but also homely. He does not believe in ethereal poetic fancy but has amply drawn from daily life. His personal experience and observation make his diction all the more realistic. His delineation of nature :-

अथ सितकिरणारतिश्रमखिन्नेव विनिद्रतारकारजनी ।
प्राभातिकसलिललवस्वेदवती क्षमतां प्रययौ ॥[5]

"The starry night keeping vigil having become disgusted with the fatigue caused by its sporting with the white rays (of the moon), gradually gets emaciated being annointed with the morning dew, as if with perspiration."

Describing Moonlight the poet portrays a bewithching scene with its enthralling effect with the help of very simple words:-

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1. *A home made mini - drum with a long tunnel like appendage made of baked clay called Tumbaknar.*
2. *Ibid-viii, 32.* 3. *Deshopdesha viii, 7.* 4. *Ibid-viii, 30.*
5. *Samayamatrika viii, 1.*

मन्मथसितातपत्रं दिग्वनितास्फटिकदर्पणो विमलो ।
विरराज रजनिरमणी सितितिलको यामिनीनाथः ॥[1]

"The lord of the night (the moon) a white parasol of cupid, the unblurred mirror made of crystal for the lady of "space", the white Tilaka of the damsel of Night, shone resplendently.

While describing the beauty of the city (presumably Srinagar) he has to say :–

(In that city) where the musical notes of the pretty swans is all the more made sweeter by their devouring fresh lotus-stalks, which (musical notes) getting diffused in the lotus-groves sound like the jingling of anklets of goddess Lakshmi[2].

About the content of Ksemendra's writings, we have made it amply clear that he chose the ordinary man or woman with his or her all weaknesses as his subject. The choice of such a subject was in itself revolutionary at that time when fixed norms were laid in this behalf by the Rhetoricians. Ksemendra not only rebelled against such hackneyed standards but provided his own thesis for Rhetorics and criticism in 'Auchityavicharacharcha' and 'Kavikanthabharna'. He showed the path to progressive trends in literature in those hoary times when dogmatic approach was the order of the day. Some ten centuries after him the humanity woke to the necessity of ushering in progressive outlook in literature, more especially after the Russian revolution of 1919. In a way Ksemendra combined in himself the charateristics of a prophet and a poet. He brought down the

1. *Kalavilasa. I, 31.*
2. *Ibid.*

poetry from the ethereal heights to the matter of fact and real dimensions.

The style which he employs deserves some mention before we close this paper. Style is defined as a mode of expression and we shall have to examine as to how Ksemendra acquits himself in this field. We know already that he uses very simple words, avoids lengthy compounds and ambiguous epithets. His appeal is direct. He does not believe in traversing zigzag when shorter routes are available; with the use of simple straight and chiselled words he produces the maximum effect. This is his immortal contribution to Sankrit literature. He lives to the maxim propounded by Coleridge "best words in best order" by any standards whatsoever. Moreover, the mode of expression he employs has his own indelible imprint on it. Regarding this trait in style J. Middleton Murray has observed "A style must be individual because it is the expression of an individual mode of feeling." Some sixty years after him another Kashmiri Soma Deva Bhatta also tried his pen on epitomizing Brhatkhatha; it can easily be understood from the comparison of the two that Ksemendra has his own style which could not be imitated by Soma Deva. His own Kashmiri Rhetotician Vamana, a protaganist of Riti School has said :-

विशिष्टा पदरचना रीतिः, रीतिरात्माकाव्यस्य ।

"Riti is a special arrangement of words; Riti is the soul of literature."

Ksemendra's writings do possess the "special arrangements of words", he does not waste a single word, bnt knows full well "that these are two edged tools, if not used well, these can bite" as very

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aptly said by Anthony Trollope. Ksemndera's mastry over the language is perfect. He very prudentially uses a particular word to project a certain context and meaning. His selection of words is superb. T.S. Elliot has said "The poet has not a "personality" to express but a particular medium",[1] which obviously connotes style. Ksemendra's style is neither artificial nor wanting in anything. It is to quote wordsworth "Man speaking to man" and to make this d finition more representative, Ksemendra added the words "about the man" to it.

These words represent Ksemendra in all his shades. In his prolific writings he performs the mental surgery of the Man, locates the disease and points towards its eradication. He with child-like innocence and simplicity employs the most direct language only to talk to man like a man, because his aim is to beckon to him :-

वनभुविमृगबन्धं हन्त पश्यन्ति नित्यम् ।
तदपि हरिणशावाः कूटपाशं विशन्ति ।।

"Alas, seeing always the deer in the trap in the jungle, even then the deerlings get into the crooked snares."[2]

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1. *The Problem of style, page I4.*
2. *Samaya Matrika, VIII, 128.*

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